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GENERAL ELECTION

Time to decide

Cameron, Clegg, Miliband, Farage & Bennett write to YOU inside

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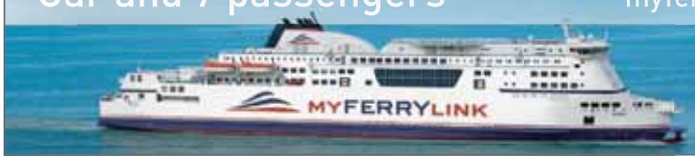

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Vote for all that is good about our proud county

HOWEVER glum the weather may sometimes be, we should never lose sight of the fact that the county of Kent is a great place to live and work.

We are blessed with beautiful countryside, low crime, a stunning coastline, towns and villages of great history, and a strong sense of community.

We are close to London, with transport links which can whisk us to the capital and to the Continent. We are a county united in our sense of fair play and a desire to do what is right. In short, we should be very proud.

This Thursday we take to the polls to decide a government - in many areas of Kent at both a national and local level. What's more it is an election where, perhaps more than ever before, every vote counts - and everyone, of course, should engage in the process.

But what we must be sure of is that the vote we make - for whatever party you choose to support - is pledged to a movement worthy of not just your support, but for our communities too. We must guard against any party that would rip the fabric of our society, that would stop us from being the inclusive, welcoming county, and indeed nation, that we are.

Never underestimate the power of your vote - it defines us as a nation for the next five years; sends a message out to the world of the sort of people we are, our values, our outlook.

We need those we elect, at all levels, to reflect our sense of pride in our nation and our desire to see our corridors of powers occupied by folk with a sound sense of what is right and wrong and the wider picture.

It's easy to think your vote doesn't make a difference. But it does and you should wield it with care and consideration.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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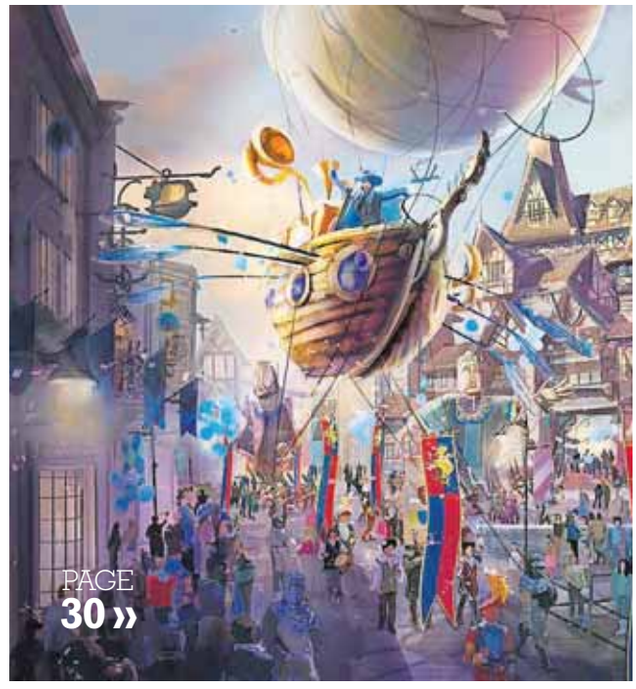

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Family's agony over son missing in Nepal quake

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

DEVASTATED: Thousands are believed dead following earthquake in Nepal

THE family of a trekker missing after the Nepal's devastating earthquake have described the Foreign Office as "shambolic" in their desperate bid to find out information.

Matt Carapiet, 23, from Bearsted, near Maidstone, was trekking to the Langtang Valley, 20 miles north of the capital Kathmandu, two days before the earthquake.

He has not been heard of since.

However, communications have been down across much of the country since the disaster last Saturday. The 7.8 magnitude quake caused massive devastation with the death toll currently 6,000. Thousands more remain missing.

In a statement the family said: "Langtang Village was almost destroyed in a landslide, as were several smaller villages nearby. Matt may have stayed there, or he may have walked back to lower villages where survivors are known to be stranded."

They claim they registered his name and their details with the Foreign Office, but when they rang for a progress check, claimed staff had no record. They rang again, and found their own contact details were wrong. In their statement, they called the Foreign Office effort "shambolic".

They added that their son, who was due to start a masters degree in architecture, already had a knee injury.

His sister Christina, 25, told the Daily Mail: "We are all really worried, we are just praying for a miracle really. We haven't heard any news at all. I just want to say to Matt, we miss you and please get in touch as soon as you can."

The Foreign Office has not yet made a comment about the complaints.

Also understood to be missing is Derek Waters, 56, from Dartford.

Rachel Lovera, from Tonbridge, suffered a 36-hour wait before she was contacted by her trekking son Seb saying he was safe. She told other families: "Don't give up hope."

It is thought the death toll is set to rise even further and could pass 10,000, including relatives of Gurkhas based in Kent.

The Gurkha Peace Foundation, based in Ashford, has been collecting money to help victims. Chairman Brian Staley said: "We will be working with other organisations but every penny we collect will go direct to Nepal."

Shutdown of nuclear reactor at Dungeness as part of £30m scheme

A NUCLEAR reactor at Dungeness power station has been taken off-line.

The shutdown is part of a £30 million maintenance programme known as a 'statutory outage' which should also provide a shot in the arm to the local community, with hundreds of extra staff drafted in to carry out the specialist work.

It gives plant technicians the chance to examine areas of the reactor they wouldn't be able to when it is operational.

More than 11,000 separate pieces of work will take place during the shutdown, with inspections inside the reactor and also new equipment installations.

Statutory outages are normally planned years in advance, taking place at plants around the country every three years. The plant's workforce will be expanded during the shutdown, with an extra 500 staff joining the site's normal 550 strong team. That, says the EDF Energy – the plant's owner – will give a boost to the local economy.

Steve Coates, plant manager at Dungeness B, said: "The team here at Dungeness B is ready for what will be a busy time for the station and they will be supported by many hundreds of contractors.

"It's good news for the local economy which will see benefits for local shops, taxis, restaurants, bed and breakfasts and hotels."

During the shutdown, the plant also advises National Grid to ensure there are no problems with electricity supply as a result of the outage. Dungeness B's other reactor is due to continue operating normally throughout the period.

The power station says an additional £4.5m will be invested in key projects this year, with enhancements made to the plant to improve performance until the end of its life in 2028. Between now and its closure, EDF has committed to investing £150 million.

TfL chief sorry for calling Southeastern service 's**t'

TRANSPORT for London chief Sir Peter Hendy has been forced into a grovelling apology after calling services by train firm Southeastern "s**t" in a recent interview.

The commissioner for London's transport made the remarks during a recently interview, comparing ticket staff with "the Gestapo" and claiming that commuters were forced into a "Wild West" environment.

But this week Sir Peter wrote to David Statham, managing director of Southeastern. He said: "My comment is unjustified and excessive and I apologise.

"I know everyone there is doing their best to offer a good service in the context of the franchise you have and the infrastructure you operate on."

Bloodied dead birds found tied to fences in grisly display

THE RSPCA says it appealing for information after a string of gruesome finds along a road where birds had been tied by their neck to fences.

The upsetting sight was spotted by passers-by along George Hill Road in Broadsatirs on April 19, but only revealed this week.

The various birds, which included chickens, magpies and crows, were found covered in blood and some tied with string around their necks to fences and gate posts.

RSPCA inspector Deborah Pert said: "We have no idea about what could have happened here and are asking anyone with any information about these incidents to let us know on 0300 123 8018. We are concerned about how they died."

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seven days

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Have I Got News For You 'broke law' says Ukip

KENT Police says it will not be taking action against comments made by a guest on TV's Have I Got News For You, which left Ukip leader Nigel Farage fuming.

During the show, Sunday Times journalist Camilla Long made claims about how much time Mr Farage has spent in the South Thanet constituency in which he is standing at the general election.

Ukip claimed that broke the law on making false claims about a candidate during an election.

A Kent Police spokesman said: ''It was suggested the comments breached the Representation of the People Act. The matter has been reviewed by officers but there's no evidence of any offences and there will be no further action.''

Duo present ambitious double vision for future of failed former airport

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THE owners of Manston Airport have unveiled – for the first time – dramatic details of their plans for the former airfield, which includes a water park and nature zone.

But they have been dismissed by opponents who insist the Thanet airport should be re-opened.

Two separate plans have been unveiled. One dubbed Live, Work, Play and the other Leisure and Arts.

The airport closed last May, despite opposition, and has remained closed ever since.

The then-owner, Ann Gloag, failed to get the freight and passenger deals necessary to make it a going concern so shut it claiming it was losing £10,000 a day.

Since then, she sold 80 per cent of her stake to developers Chris Cartner and Trevor Musgrove, the duo who helped drive Discovery Park forward after the withdrawal of Pfizer.

In a statement, the duo said: "We believe the focus should be on creating a sustainable development which is socially, environmentally and economically viable.

PROPOSAL: Leisure scheme

"More will be revealed later this summer when a period of public consultation begins. Live, Work, Play has three distinct areas – commercial, residential and parkland – with a central civic hub offering a range of facilities. The runway will be retained, becoming the main road link for the site, set within new parkland open for all to enjoy."

It also includes what is termed a 'water-based leisure hub'.

Leisure and Arts has a different focus. The pair explained: "Commercial and housing zones would be complemented with arts trails, a sculpture park with the site's heritage preserved with parkland, as well as the existing museums."

But Ruth Bailey, standing in South Thanet for the Manston Airport Independent Party, said the plans were all "pie in the sky".

She said: "A few people have said the plans look like a child has taken some crayons to a piece of paper, and drawn things that everyone would like in a perfect world. If the airport re-opened then there would be jobs created straight away. The whole thing is petulant and childish."

CHANGE: Sandi Toksvig

Toksvig forms 'pragmatic' political party

TV AND radio presenter Sandi Toksvig has revealed she quit as host of topical BBC Radio 4 panel game the News Quiz as she plans to start a new political party.

The star, who has a home in Herne Bay, says she intends to set up the party, to be called the Women's Equality Party.

It follows her surprise announcement earlier this week that she was stepping down as host of the News Quiz after nine years.

Speaking to the BBC, she said: "I have made jokes over and over again about politics and, do you know, this election I've had enough.

"And I have decided that instead of making jokes about it, I need to participate. It is a fantastic group of women – and indeed men – who have decided that enough is enough and we need to make some changes."

She said they hoped to get MPs elected by the time of the 2020 election. No candidates will be fielded for next week's election.

She added: "It's not going to be right or left. It's going to be a very pragmatic, female approach to things, which is to say, 'What is the problem that we have in front of us? And what is the most practical and possible way in which we can solve this?'."

University ranks high in education guide

THE University of Kent has been ranked highly in a respected guide - putting it comfortably in the top 25 institutions in the country.

According to the Complete University Guide, it came 22nd out of a total of 126.

The guide rates universities on 10 measures that include research quality, research intensity and student satisfaction.

The university's senior deputy vice chancellor David Nightingale said: ''Kent's strong league table results continue with this latest announcement, which comes during what has been a highly successful year for the university.

''This result is also further good news for our students and staff, all of whom have helped establish Kent's excellent reputation on the regional, national and international level.''

The university, based in Canterbury, was particularly highly ranked for its architecture, social policy, American studies and hospitality, leisure, recreation and tourism courses.

Last post for seaside branch sparks protest

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to save the main Post Office in Whitstable staged a sit-in on Wednesday night.

The 15-strong group took over the post office from 5.30pm, stating that they wanted to ensure the service remained in the town.

The Gladstone Road outlet shut this week with users now having to travel to nearby towns.

Campaigner Julie Wassmer, said: ''The action is a last resort by residents to highlight the closure of post offices up and down the country following the privatisation of Royal Mail – which left the unprofitable part of the business, the Post Office, to flounder.''

The peaceful occupation concluded in the early hours of Thursday morning.

A spokesman for the Post Office says it hopes to open a temporary office in the Gladstone Road car park in due course in order to ensure no extended break in provision for the town. It says it continues to hold discussions about opening a counter in the town as a franchise. A protest earlier in the town was attended by around 400 people.

Caution for teen who lied about alley rape

A 16-year-old girl has been cautioned for wasting police time after making up a story about being raped by a stranger.

A full-scale investigation had been launched on December 8 after the girl contacted police saying she had been attacked in Astley Avenue, Dover.

House-to-house enquiries were conducted and extensive work carried out.

But the investigation highlighted numerous anomalies and the alleged victim was arrested some weeks later for perverting the course of justice. She subsequently admitted that she had not been raped nor was she in the Astley Avenue area at the time.

Detectives referred the matter to the Crown Prosecution Service and this week the 16-year-old was formally cautioned for wasting police time.

Det Sgt Fiona Mattholie, said: ''A huge amount of police time and resources were wasted investigating false claims. Not only were valuable police resources diverted but the claims of a stranger rape in the area caused local residents a great deal of concern.''

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agenda

What will make next week's headlines…

LIVE election results at kentnews.co.uk

AFTER all the hype, the county finally takes to the polling stations on Thursday bringing to an end one of the most intriguing general election campaigns in recent history.

With all the polls predicting a hung parliament, Kent will be a key focus of the national media with two crunch seats being contested.

South Thanet could see Nigel Farage finally elected to Westminster for Ukip, while Mark Reckless would appear to be fighting a tough battle to cling on to his Ukip seat in Rochester and Strood.

The polls open from 7am on Thursday morning and close at 10pm. The first results are not

expected until the early hours of the morning.

For a full results service throughout the night, log on to www.kentnews.co.uk.

Watch out for rail works over the long weekend

TRAIN travellers are urged to check before they set out over this bank holiday weekend due to engineering works being conducted by Network Rail.

There will be no trains to Charing Cross or Waterloo East until Tuesday. Cannon Street services only run on Monday. Services will be diverted to Victoria and Blackfriars.

Meanwhile, work to build Rochester's new station and resignal the railway through the Medway towns continues with buses replacing trains between Meopham/Strood and Gillingham on all three days.

There are other works taking place across the network too.

...also

Victoria in 3,000 shots

SHOPPERS at the Royal Victoria Place complex in Tunbridge Wells can see a recently unveiled portrait of Queen Victoria - comprising 3,000 images submitted by members of the public.

It marks the centre's 21st anniversary.

Direct service begins

EUROSTAR starts its first full week of a year-round service direct to the south of France this week.

The services runs from London, via Ebbsfleet and Ashford, to Lyon, Avignon and Marseille.

Fun down at the castle

HEVER Castle will be expecting bumper crowds this weekend for its May Day Festival this weekend.

Events at the historic site near Edenbridge, childhood home to Anne Boleyn, continue through until Monday.

Avoid using our A&Es

GPs are appealing to people to take extra care this bank holiday weekend to avoid putting a strain on A&E departments.

They advise taking minor injuries to minor injury units or to check with pharmacists for treatments.

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Leaders reach out to YOU

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

ACROSS the following few pages, in a series of articles penned especially for you, the leaders of the main political parties make a last desperate appeal to the Kent voter for their support as the nation goes to the polls this Thursday.

Over the following pages, David Cameron, Ed Miliband, Nigel Farage, Nick Clegg and Natalie Bennett write for KoS, setting out their vision and what they can do for Kent.

In what has been an election simply too close to call, every single vote is vital. You may have an MP sat on a sizeable majority where you live, but it is worth remembering that if everyone spent the time to get involved in the democratic process, every seat could become a marginal.

Because those who traditionally don't vote are the ones who could make all the difference. Your vote is vital. Your vote can make all the difference.

The rise of Ukip in the build-up to this election has had a remarkable impact on the way key seats are likely to fall.

While it would take a remarkable swing towards Nigel Farage's party for him to, realistically, return more than two MPs in the county, the erosion of support pulled in from other parties - most notably the Conservatives - could make a huge difference.

Not only could it eat into the Tory majority of many incumbents, it could potentially split the vote so dramatically the likes of Labour or the Liberal Democrats could spring a surprise.

Which means this Thursday will be one full of drama and excitement. But don't let it pass you by. Don't think politics doesn't have a direct and very real impact on your life. It does.

Everything from the provision of all your local services, the way the police operate, how our children and grandchildren are taught at school, even the general mood of the nation, is influenced by those we elect, at both a local and national level, on Thursday.

And this is your big chance to ensure you have a clear and equal say in what direction this nation heads in. Don't let this opportunity pass you by - be sure to vote on May 7.

VOTE: Make sure you exercise your democratic right in an election which could go to the wire

LIVE RESULTS AT KENTNEWS.CO.UK

DON'T miss a moment of the excitement as it unfolds during the evening of May 7 and into the morning of May 8 at our website, www.kentnews.co.uk.

We will be bringing you the results as they happen from around the county, as well as live updates from South Thanet - the seat where all eyes will be on the outcome as the Tories, Labour and Ukip all bid to land a seat which, should Ukip lose, could spell the end of Nigel Farage as the party's leader.

You can tune into our LIVE coverage throughout the night at www.kentnews.co.uk - a service which will continue into Friday as our reporters compile all the results, bring you the latest reaction, and also start providing the results from the numerous local elections taking place across the county.

The polls close at 10pm and the first results of the Westminster polls are expected to start emerging in the early hours of the morning.

Counting for the local elections is not starting until the morning of the Friday in many areas, with results not expected until later in the day or early evening.

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Let us finish the job

David Cameron is seeking re-election as prime minster and warns a vote against the Conservative Party, which dominates Kent's political landscape, would spell doom for the country.

PLEA: Tory leader and prime minister David Cameron

THE election on May 7 is the fight of our national life – and a key battle line is running right through the heart of Kent.

The Conservative message at this election could not be more clear: stick with the plan that is turning our country around.

Last year we were the fastest-growing economy in the developed world. There are 760,000 more businesses than in 2010. An amazing 1000 jobs have been created every single day since Conservatives came to office.

People across Kent are keeping more of their own money, with income taxes cut by £825 for the typical taxpayer. Thousands of teenagers have started their adult lives not by signing on but starting an apprenticeship. Pensioners from Rochester to Dover have seen their state pensions rise by £950, giving them more dignity and security in retirement.

This plan is about giving you security at every stage of your life – and the Conservative manifesto builds on it.

In its pages are plans for three million more apprenticeships and 200,000 starter homes for young first-time buyers. A Conservative Government would help to let you keep more of your hard-earned money – no 40p tax until you're earning £50,000, and the income-tax free allowance raised to £12,500.

For young families, we would double the amount of free childcare available to working parents of three and four year olds; 30 free hours a week – equivalent to £5,000.

Conservatives have also made a clear commitment to protect our NHS. There's a simple reason we can do that: because we have built a strong economy. That's why we'd finish the job, clearing Britain's deficit, running a surplus by 2018, and insuring our economy against future shocks.

All this is at stake in May. The big question is: do you want to stick with the competent team that has got us this far – or do you want to head into the chaos of Ed Miliband and Labour being propped up by the SNP?

We are looking down the barrel of a truly chaotic scenario: with every vote in Parliament, Ed Miliband would rely on SNP support. That would mean Nicola Sturgeon making fresh demands each time – for more borrowing, taxes and welfare. The British people will pick up the bill. And with Westminster locked in permanent chaos, our economic progress would judder to a halt.

You might think: 'my vote doesn't have anything to do with that' – but it does now more than ever. We are just 23 seats short of a Conservative majority Government that would be strong, decisive and accountable. A vote for any other party makes it harder for Conservatives to get those 23 constituencies and keep Labour and the SNP out.

If you vote for Ukip, that takes Ed Miliband and Nicola Sturgeon a step closer to Downing Street. And what would we get then? No in-out referendum on the EU. No control on immigration. No reform of welfare. Just more of the same that got Britain into the mess in the first place.

It would be a tragedy if all the hard work of the past five years were to be ruined. Only a Conservative vote in your local constituency will secure Britain's future. So let's stick to the plan, see through the job we've started – and make our great country greater still.

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Fighting for justice

Labour leader **Ed Miliband** appears to be edging ahead in the polls, but in Kent he faces a tough challenge in a county so traditionally blue. He writes to explain why Kent should vote for his party...

READY: Labour leader Ed Miliband

THIS election offers voters a clear choice between the Tories' failed plan for Britain - and a better Labour plan that offers hope for you, your family, the county of Kent and our country.

Running through our plan is a single, simple idea: that Britain only succeeds when working people succeed.

The Tories offer more of the same old ideology that says they only need to look after a few at the top and everyone else will get dragged along behind. They say that what's good for the richest and most powerful is always good for the whole country. Their problem is that last five years have proven them wrong.

They boast about an economic recovery but, while it may have brought the banker bonuses back to the City of London, it has not reached the front door of families in your part of the world.

Average wages are down £1,600 since David Cameron entered Downing Street, energy bills have risen by a £300 a year, millions are stuck in low-paid insecure jobs, and home ownership has fallen to its lowest level for 30 years.

The people of Kent know how the Tories' approach has let down their communities. Cuts have forced Kent County Council to turn out street lights at night. Primary schools under Conservative control in Medway are ranked the worst in the country and the Medway Maritime Hospital is in special measures.

In some areas patients have been forced to queue outside GP surgeries after a £3 billion unnecessary, top down reorganisation of the NHS.

Payday lenders and gambling outlets blight your high streets. By supporting Labour candidates like Tristan Osborne in Chatham and Aylesford and Clair Hawkins in Dover and Deal, you can return a Labour government which will reverse five years of Tory mistakes and properly support working families.

We'll put in place stronger controls on immigration too, strengthening our borders so we can count people in and out and deal with illegal immigration, easing the burden on towns like Dover. And people who come here won't be able to claim benefits for at least two years, because it's important to pay in before you take out.

Remember that the Tories have utterly failed to meet their immigration targets. Their manifesto is full of hollow pledges– unfunded and unbelievable promises which don't add up.

Every one of Labour's policies is paid for without requiring any extra borrowing because we know that the nation still faces tough times. So we will cut the deficit every year, raise living standards or working families and ask those with the broadest shoulders – particularly the super-rich avoiding their taxes - to carry more of the burden.

Labour will cut taxes for small businesses, reverse David Cameron's millionaire's tax cut, close the loopholes that favour off-shore hedge funds, and ask the owners of properties worth more than £2 million to help pay for vital investment in our NHS.

Only Labour has a real plan with real money as a down-payment on our commitment to stop the NHS sliding backwards: a £2.5 billion 'Time to Care Fund which will pay for 20,000 more nurses, 8,000 more GPs, 5,000 more homecare workers and 3,000 more midwives.

Only Labour will reward hard work by raising the minimum wage to more than £8 an hour by October 2019, as well as freezing energy bills, so they can fall but not rise, until 2017.

Only Labour has the policies to restore the dream of home ownership, which is becoming elusive for so many people in Kent and elsewhere, by building at least 200,000 new homes a year nationally with priority for local first time buyers.

If you elect a Labour government on May 7, be sure that I am ready to fight for you, every single day.

Extending influence

Nigel Farage's rise to a political force has been meteroric. As he prepares to fight for South Thanet, here he tells you why the Ukip surge in Kent is only set to continue.

CONFIDENT: Ukip leader Nigel Farage

UKIP is a powerful campaigning and political force in Kent. The party has made huge strides in the Garden of England over the past five years, and this election marks an opportunity for you to vote for a political party that represents you and your views at both a local and national level.

We're the official opposition on Kent County Council, and we're fielding huge slates of candidates for council elections also taking place on May 7. In short, I guess you could say that Ukip takes Kent very seriously indeed. Not just because the people here naturally gravitate towards us politically, but I suppose you might say that it being my home, and me being a champion of the area, and an MEP for it for the past 16 years, has helped a great deal.

And we genuinely try incredibly hard here on big issues that matter in Kent.

Just recently, Ukip conducted a major survey of residents to ascertain whether or not they supported the Conservative government's plans to build hundreds of thousands of new houses across our greenfields. The answer, as you can imagine, was a resounding, 'no'.

This is the crucial difference between Ukip and the other parties. We actually consult residents. We actually try and represent your views. And mostly, this is because we are just like you. Real people, with real life experience, trying to do the best by our local areas.

I believe this is one of the reasons we topped the polls here in the European elections last year. Ukip got 751,439 votes last May, 32 percent of the vote, and returned four MEPs for the south east region.

One of the particular highlights of last year of course, was when the Member of Parliament for Rochester and Strood, Mark Reckless, resigned his seat, joined Ukip, and forced a by-election. The fact that he won, despite the Conservative Party promising to "throw the kitchen sink" at us, not only showed the great appeal of Ukip in Kent, and disproved the old "wasted vote" myth, but it also displayed the honour that Ukip is trying to inject back into British politics.

Mr Reckless could, as others have done, simply crossed the floor in the House of Commons, and sat as a Ukip MP without consulting his constituents. But he did what I think was one of the most honourable, and risky things that our politics has seen in decades. And Kent voters gave him the approval he deserves.

Ukip is the only party that really gets the concerns of Kent residents – a county which has found itself of the front lines of England for centuries.

We understand the concerns about mass immigration and the housing crisis that London's Conservative Mayor intends to shift onto Kent. We understand that core national infrastructure like Manston Airport needs a viable future. And we understand that with schools, GP surgeries, hospitals, our fisheries, and our roads under increasing strain, we have to draw a line under the past eleven years of mass immigration, and get the people of this county a real, free and fair referendum on the European Union.

You saw it in Rochester and Strood, and in the European elections. If you vote Ukip, you get Ukip – and that's exactly what I urge you all to go out and do on May 7.

Anchored in centre

Nick Clegg, deputy prime minister and leader of the Liberal Democrats, reflects on five years in coalition and what his party has done for you...

DETERMINED: Nick Clegg, leader of the Liberal Democrats

AMidst all the breathless speculation and ever-changing predictions, there's one thing all the pundits, pollsters and forecasters agree on about next month's election. No one is going to win it outright.

The choice before you on May 7 is therefore not who will be prime minister, but who you want sitting round the cabinet table, and who you want representing you in Parliament.

Since 2010, the Liberal Democrats have demonstrated time and again that we're capable of taking the tough decisions to clear up the mess Labour left. We've cut the deficit in half while protecting spending on the NHS and schools, giving pensioners a record rise in the state pension and cutting income tax by £825 for 27 million people.

But we've also shown that we're prepared to stand up to the Tories and stop their extreme policies that would damage our country. We stopped them from allowing bosses to fire workers without reason, letting companies run schools for a profit and cutting the pay of public sector workers outside London.

If you put the Lib Dems back in Government, we'll continue to anchor it firmly in the centre ground, keeping us moving forward along the path to prosperity. We won't let the Tories and Ukip drag us off to the Right, or Labour and the SNP drag us off to the Left.

We'll finish the job of balancing the books, and finish it fairly. We'll eliminate the deficit on time in 2018, by cutting spending where necessary but asking the rich to pay their fair share too. And once we've done so, we won't go on cutting for cutting's sake as George Osborne proposes. We'll use proceeds from our hard-won economic recovery to give the NHS the money it needs and to invest in roads, railways and homes.

We'll borrow £70 billion less than Labour and cut £50 billion less than the Conservatives, reducing the national debt while protecting the public services on which we all rely.

Across Kent, Liberal Democrat candidates are working hard to strengthen the local economy and make Britain fairer, and they need your support to do it. In Maidstone, for example, the excellent Jasper Gerard is campaigning to protect the education budget from cradle to college, to give every child the best possible start in life.

The Liberal Democrats have already given Kent schools more than £130 million through our pupil premium to support disadvantaged children, and introduced free school meals for all of Kent's 50,000 infants.

We've also invested heavily in apprenticeships, and more than two million people have started one since 2010, including 47,000 in Kent, and Jasper and I got to speak to some of them when we visited Mid-Kent College recently.

With Lib Dems like Jasper Gerard representing you in Parliament, and the Liberal Democrats fighting for you every day in Government, we can build a stronger economy and a fairer society, creating opportunity for everyone.

Equality at its heart

Natalie Bennett, leader of the Green Pary is convinced that if you want to vote outside of the three traditional main parties, then her organisation is the one you should choose

CHANGE: Natalie Bennett, leader of the Green Party

NTHIS election, there is one party that offers voters a choice different from that of the Establishment parties.

One party that wants a politics which works for the benefit of everyone, not just the wealthiest or the most powerful.

One party which pledges to preserve the environment, protect the NHS and make sure everyone is paid fairly for the work they do.

That party is the Green Party. A vote for the Greens is a vote for real change, a vote to end the politics of fear, a vote to end austerity. A vote for the Green Party is a vote for the common good.

On the NHS, the Green Party pledges to repeal the damaging Health and Social Care Act, which has seen government pass its responsibility to provide free, universal healthcare onto private companies who profit from people's ill health.

The Green Party believes profit has no place in healthcare. We will maintain a publicly funded, publicly provided health service free at the point of use. We will increase the overall NHS budget, increase investment in mental healthcare and provide for free dentistry and prescriptions.

We will provide free social care for older people and place more emphasis on prevention of ill-health and on primary and community care.

We will ensure that everyone who wants one has a decent secure job, and is paid at least a living wage (we will make the minimum wage a living wage, which we will raise to £10/hour by 2020).

We will stabilise and tightly regulate the financial sector, whose greed and recklessness have been a major cause of our recent economic difficulties. We will create a robust taxation system that promotes equality and sustainability.

The Green Party wants an economy which benefits everyone, which promotes equality and fairness and which treats everyone with respect.

The Green Party also recognises that climate change is the great crisis of our age, and we need to take real, meaningful action to tackle it. We will provide a free nationwide retrofit insulation programme, concentrating on areas where fuel poverty is most serious. This will insulate nine million homes in total, and take at least two million homes out of fuel poverty.

We will invest in the generation of renewable energy, oppose fracking and end subsidies to fossil fuels. We will take action to tackle air pollution, which causes an estimated 29,000 premature deaths each each year in the UK, and reduce air pollution in the UK to comply with EU limits.

Britain has the wealth and resources to do great things. We can build an economy that gives everyone their fair share of the world's sixth richest economy. We can create a humane, caring society that supports everyone's needs.

And we can be a world leader in tackling the threat of climate change.

A vote for the Green Party on May 7 is an opportunity to live up to this potential and to create a society that works in the best interests of everyone.

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PICK up next weekend's Kent on Sunday for our general election results special.

We will bring you the full outcome of every constituency in the county, complete with a map of how Kent's new political landscape will look once all the votes have been counted.

In addition, we will bring you all the latest reaction to the ups and downs of the election results and what it means to you.

Our special edition will be hitting the shelves on Saturday - just hours after the final votes have been counted.

And, best of all, just like every week, the Kent on Sunday general election special edition will be completely free.

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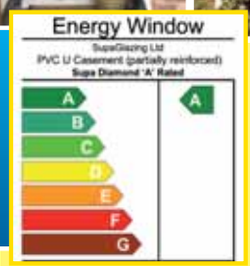

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Battle for local council power to reach climax on polling day

Many of us will get to cast more than one vote on Thursday as there are hundreds of council seats up for grabs too, reports **Maria Chiorando...**

WHEN May 7 dawns, a battle will be waged at the ballot box.

But the battle is not just for seats in Parliament. Away from the cut and thrust of Westminster, voting also opens for many councils. And those wielding power at local level arguably have more clout when it comes to the decisions that affect our day-to-day lives.

The question many are asking is whether the chaos at national level – where no party is likely to take overall control – will filter into local politics? After all, with some councils' balance of power teetering on a knife edge, anything could potentially happen. And with a national surge of popularity for smaller parties including Ukip and the Greens, will their numbers swell at a local level?

Labour's Vince Maple is the leader of the opposition on Medway Council. He describes the local elections as the 'biggest single day of democracy in Medway', with the council seeing all 55 of its seats up for grabs.

As a unitary council, Medway is responsible for all local government functions within its area, including those often performed by the national government, for example education, planning and transport.

According to Cllr Maple: "The local elec-

VOTE: Results of the local elections will not be known until late Friday

HAVE YOUR SAY: Many of us will be voting nationally and locally

tion is so important for Medway - it is when the 17 per cent of Kent, which is not under KCC, gets to have a say on how the £315 million allocated to the area is spent."

With 31 of the 55 councillors currently representing the Conservative Party, 17 Labour, along with four Ukip members and three Liberal Democrats, the council has more political variety than many others in the county, which are awash with a sea of Tory blue.

In addition, the constituency of Rochester and Strood, within Medway's boundaries, boasts Kent's only non-Tory MP with Mark Reckless of Ukip as the incumbent.

"The by-election last November, when Mark Reckless was elected shone a spotlight in the area," Cllr Maple explains. "It shows that there is potential for parties other than the Tories to break through – and at Labour, we have strong support in the area, and a full slate of candidates, so we're hoping to see change."

There are 12 district and borough councils in Kent (in addition to Medway unitary). They are in charge of rubbish collection, recycling, council tax collections, housing and planning applications; the services many will have in mind when electing their candidate.

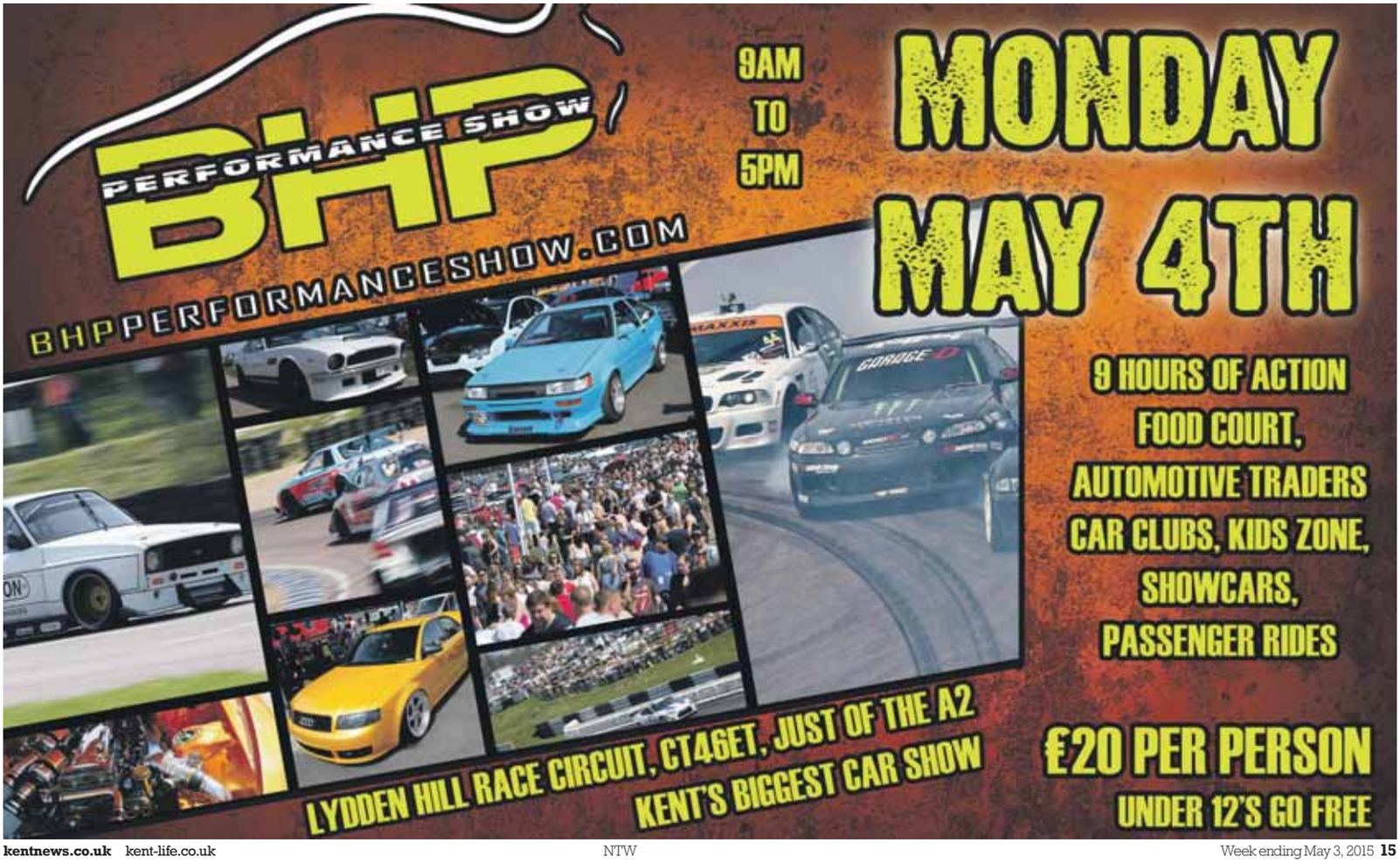
Like the general election, local elections work on the first past the post system, but there are differences too. Julie Beilby, acting returning officer and chief executive of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, says: "A UK general election usually takes place every five years while, in Tonbridge and Malling, full borough council elections take place every four years."

And in fact the organisation of the local authorities means there are several ways elections take place. Either all the councillors are elected every four years (for example, in Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling), half the councillors are elected every two years (this happens in Tunbridge Wells) or a third of the councillors are elected every year for three years, with no elections in the fourth year (as in Maidstone, for example).

The stakes are highest for those councils with every seat up for election. Two of which are Gravesham and Thanet – the only councils under Labour control.

Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi is Labour's prospectively parliamentary candidate for Gravesham, and also the lead member for business and

Continues on Page 16



Continued from Page 15

the community for the council's Northfleet ward.

He says: "Both elections are important for different reasons. Obviously national issues are important because they have an impact locally. On top of that, councils are bound by the level of funding they receive, which is decided at central government level.

"Councillors work with the resources they have, but have influence over the whole range of local concerns, including issues like recycling collection and street lighting.

"This means that disillusionment with the current government could see people turning away from the Conservatives in the local elections. Gravesham is interesting, because we have a Tory MP (Adam Holloway) but a Labour-led council."

The split at Gravesham is very close, with 19 Conservative councillors to 25 Labour.

While the constituency of South Thanet finds itself in the full media glare, so too does Thanet District Council. With relatively high levels of Ukip support in the area, and front man Nigel Farage standing for Parliament, could the purple party make its influence felt?

Currently, 26 of the 56 seats are Labour. The Tories are a close second though, with 22. There is a smattering of other colours too, with three Independent councillors, two from Ukip and one Green.

At the last election in May 2011, there was no overall control for any party, but when a Tory counsellor swapped allegiances to become an Independent, the Labour Party lead a minority administration.

Ian Driver is a Green Party candidate for South Thanet and a Thanet councillor. "People on the doorstep have been clear they have had enough of the council – so I think we are going to see changes," he says. "I think that Ukip may win more ground, in the same way they will perform nationally.

"The Green Party have 13 candidates standing for the council elections, and we are hopeful that we might have some success. I think something we're seeing nationally is that there is more interest in smaller parties."

John Chappell is a Ukip candidate for the Sherwood ward in Tunbridge Wells. Unlike Thanet, even by Kent's standards, this borough is staunchly blue , with a massive 38 Conservative councillors dwarfing the three Labour, three Lib Dem, two Independent and single Ukip representatives.

Tunbridge Wells will see 17 of its 48 seats up for grabs.

Mr Chappell says: "There are some areas – and Tunbridge Wells is one of them – that will always be very Tory. But there is definitely change happening.

"It is very important for people to vote at local elections if they want to make changes in their area and get the support they need. And what we're hearing again and again is that people are becoming disillusioned with the main parties. I believe Ukip will see success across the board."

In addition, he sees local elections as more democratic than their general counterpart.

He says: "All parties big or small tend to spend the same amount of money on promoting their candidate whereas at general elections the larger parties use a lot more money and time on promoting and canvassing. I think this means fairer representation."

Something that a number of candidates have raised is the idea of how people vote for their councillor as opposed to their MP – and how this difference could see more than a smattering of smaller parties represented alongside the main parties.

"I think some of the tactical voting people will use going into a general won't necessarily be relevant in a local," says Cllr Maple. "We say that if you vote for Labour, that is who you will get. It's a clearer message – tactical voting is very confusing."

Ian Driver, who has served for Labour, as an Independent and now the Greens, added: "There is some truth to the idea that people may vote differently

"When you have smaller wards, and a bigger chance of seeing a small party win, you may be more inclined to vote for that party. With more diversity of parties represented at the local level, people are possibly less likely to vote tactically, and more likely to vote with their conscience.

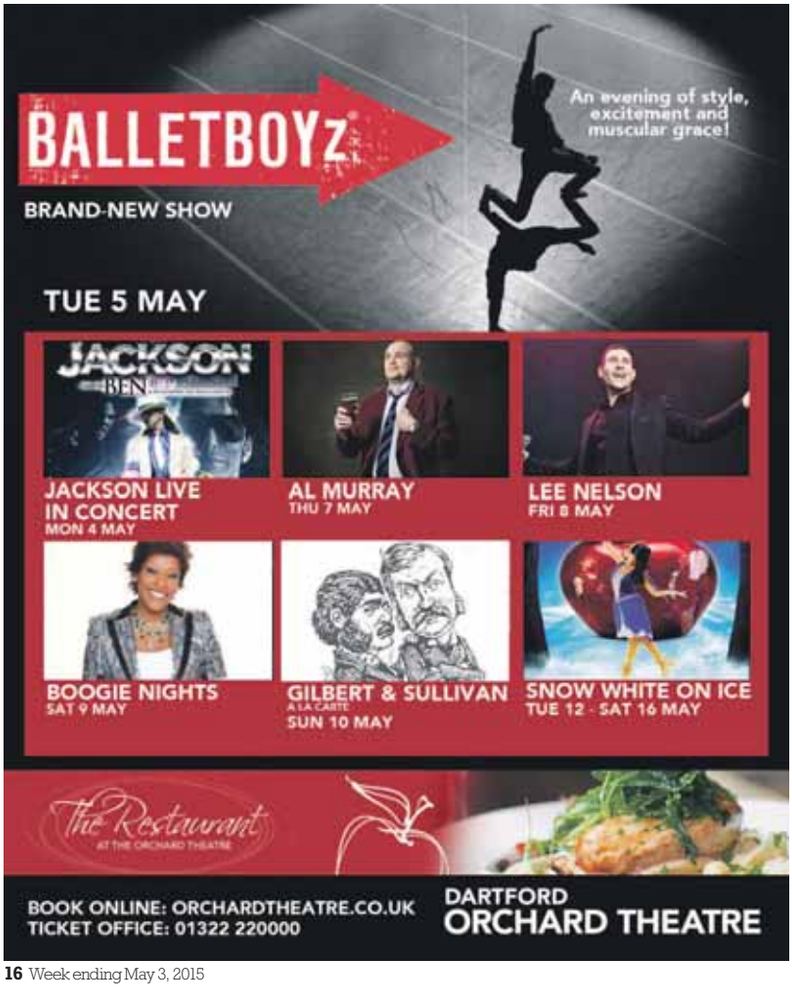
ITS OWN BOSS: Medway controls its own destiny as a unitary authority

"But I still believe that first past the post is wrong on a local level as well as a national one – you don't get proper representation. It favours the big, traditional parties.

"Proportional representation [an electoral system in which parties gain seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for them] would give a clearer picture of how many people were supporting a party."

While some councils may see some shake up, it is hard to see the Tories losing their stranglehold in other boroughs. Ashford, for example, has Conservatives occupying 30 of the 43 seats – all of which are up for re-election. Tonbridge, which has had Tory MP John Stanley in place for 40 years, is unsurprisingly another Conservative stronghold, with 47 blue seats out of 54. Canterbury is another Tory area with a huge 34 blue seats out of 47.

Cllr Driver says: "While there is likely to always be a lot of Tory representation in the county, I think there's a real chance of smaller parties seeing a breakthrough."



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SUCCESS: John McParland and pupils from across the year groups of the John Wallis Academy in Ashford, with has turned its fortunes around over the last five years

Principal puts faith in staff and students to transform fortunes

It has undergone three name changes, but finally one of Ashford's most troubled schools has sailed into calmer, warmer waters. **Chris Britcher** meets captain of the ship, principal John McParland

HE TURNED down a trial for Mancester United. Rejected an offer by a New York banker to make him a millionaire in the space of a year. And after years of training for the priesthood stopped short of being ordained because he didn't want a life of celibacy.

But despite changing his mind on three life-changing options, John McParland has no regrets about taking over the reins of a school with a long, troubled history and transforming it into what one education expert now describes as the county's "top non-selective".

He has the desire to succeed and win, perhaps, hot-wired into him.

His thick Irish accent exposes the roots for which he remains so proud. His age - which he refuses to reveal but let's assume he's in his 50s - disguises a remarkable sporting career which saw him become one of the most famous Gaelic football stars - a fame which would take him far and wide.

His 'regular' footballing talents could have also seen him line up alongside the legendary George Best at Old Trafford.

In short, he has that inner drive which motivates athletes that only success is good enough. And that steely determination has been required in his current post.

The John Wallis Academy in south Ashford has been many things to many people over the years. For many of a certain age, it was known originally as the Duncan Bowen, a tough comprehensive accessed via the main road through an often troubled and frequently deprived part of the town.

Stanhope sprang up in the 1960s as a residential estate, much of it social housing, but poor design which did little to generate pride in the community, hindered any chance of recovery.

The school, always an essential cog in any community and, in many respects, a beacon of hope for the next generation, became tarred with an unwanted brush.

During the 1990s, it under went a rebrand - renamed Christ Church High and coinciding with a massive multi-million pound investment in Stanhope itself at the end of the century, designed to create living spaces which engendered community spirit and pride.

> **"When we opened in 2010, I was excluding students every day for swearing at me. It was the bad language which upset me more than the defiance."**
>
> **John McParland,**
> Principal, John Wallis Academy

The school itself made a subtle shift too. It switched its main entrance - from one side of the site to the other. A move which saw it lose its Stanhope postcode and embrace, instead, one for neighbouring Kingsnorth.

But the school struggled and in 2010, it was announced it would become, instead, one of the new breed of academies.

Coupled with the housing sprawl which saw the once rural Kingsnorth and nearby Park Farm estates break out of their original landscapes and push into the school's catchment area, by the time the John Wallis Academy was born, much had changed.

Stanhope was much improved; the blend of housing more balanced. All the school had to do was shrug off a reputation it had failed to lose for almost 30 years.

Enter John McParland.

Poached from the successful St Simon Stock Catholic School in Maidstone, he was lured over by the academy's sponsors - a combination of Kent County Council, the Diocese of Canterbury, Canterbury Christ Church University, and the public Benenden School.

Few can have imagined the remarkable impact he would have. And his key weapons? A reassuring reliance on good old fashioned respect and good manners, underpinning a desire for pride in the surroundings.

"When we took over, the intake was around 129, down from 210 a few years earlier; no-one wanted to come," he explains sat in his office in one of the modern new buildings which now defines the school.

"I introduced a uniform – blazer and tie – and parents were standing up and saying their children would not wear it. I simply said 'if you don't then I'm afraid your child won't be attending this academy'.

"Then I closed the gate at lunchtimes and said students have to stay here, and parents complained. We had a lot of challenges. No-one wanted an academy here at the time, and it was very difficult – certainly one of the most difficult I have had in my teaching career.

"But when I look back now at what we have achieved five years later..."

The turn-around is remarkable.

From a failing, fading, school, it has taken over the running of a nearby primary (homed in the rather glum surroundings of the former Duncan Bowen building), introduced a sixth form, seen a host of new buildings, its most recent Ofsted rated it 'good'

Continues on page 20

Continues from page 19

across the board, and its value-added score between Key Stage 2 and 4 (from primary through to GCSEs) was rated the best non-grammar in the county. And the third best of all schools.

The Ofsted report, conducted in January 2014, was telling.

It described Mr MrParland as an "inspirational principal" with and "ambitious vision" and of the school's "determination no student is left behind".

Crucially, it added "students behave well and they feel safe...they are proud of the academy".

Peter Read, who runs the Kent Independent Education Advice service, believes the school has achieved beyond expectation - much of that thanks to its leadership.

The regular KoS columnist explains: "This is a school flourishing in an area that includes much deprivation, and where many would dismiss the school and its students as bound to fail because of the very high proportion of disadvantaged and SEN [special educational needs] pupils.

"Other schools with a similar intake do fail beacuse of low expectations and poor leadership. The John Wallis show what can be done to overcome disadvantage."

Just in case you're wondering, its boost has not simply been down to pulling in students from the newer sprawling housing estates and ignoring Stanhope. Stanhope children still get priority - and its boosting that community which is still a key goal.

It may seem like a basic requirement for anyone of a certain age, but the lack of respect, behaviour and discipline in schools can be eye-opening - students swearing at teachers, fooling around in class. The list goes on.

PAST: Linden Grove is sited within the old Duncan Bowen buildings

"When we opened in 2010," the principal explains, "I was excluding students every day for swearing at me.

"For the first six months, from 8.30am to noon every day, their parents would line-up to come in and raise an issue and I would have to explain our ethos.

"It was the bad language which upset me more than the defiance. So I excluded students for bad language. Parents would come in and say 'well bad language is everywhere' and I simply said it wasn't and that we were not having it here."

It was a zero tolerance policy which appears to have worked wonders.

Certainly, being shown around the school, there is no sense of chaos or unruliness. When the principal enters a classroom the students all stand up. There is a mutual respect which does it proud.

But the new regime did not come about easily.

Much of the senior leadership team was replaced. Trying to attract teachers to a school with such a damaged reputation was no easy task, either. Despite repeated efforts to get the calibre required, the school was forced to look to Northern Ireland and Eire instead.

Mr McParland recruited those he needed, who bought into the mission, and jetted them back to Kent to help pull the school up by the proverbial bootstraps.

"I could help them with accommodation," he explains, "look after them, and become something of a father figure to them in order to help them to settle in and work.

"Some of those young teachers have helped me turn key departments around."

There's more to this, of course, than simply getting the right people in.

In addtion, the school has seen several million pounds worth of new buildings and also introduced a host of vocational courses - plumping, electrical, construction, health and beauty - all designed to engage students for whom the education system was letting slip through its fingers.

Its history, however, remains there for all to see.

The Linden Grove Primary School continues to exist in the former Duncan Bowen buildings. Amid the splendour of the new-build on the opposite side of the site, they are in stark contrast; a throw-back to the classic schools of the 1970s and 80s.

It had originally resisted attempts to be incorporated into the academy set-up, but after falling into special measures, it was engulfed to make the John Wallis now provide a three to 19 educational offering.

The plan is to sell off a slice of the school grounds to allow for these drab buildings - which now own the Stanhope Road address - to be pulled down and a new, modern, primary school to be built in its place.

The wranglings over the site have rumbled on and hopes of a 2015 opening has now been shifted back as far as 2018.

However, again, the staff at the school was given an overhaul and those there now demonstrate the same desire to succeed as their colleagues in the nicer buildings. The classrooms are colourful and bright, the children happy and well behaved.

The sense of turning a corner here is tangible.

"Don't get me wrong," explains the principal, "we still have some very

NOT ALL ACADEMIES ARE THE SAME...

THE fate of some of our academies has been a far cry from that witnessed at the John Wallis.

The Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate was the county's first - mixing Tony Blair's original concept of corporate and community partners to help drive up standards and achievement levels.

Replacing the failing Ramsgate School, it should have ticked all the right boxes; the backing of multi-billionaire Roger de Haan and Kent County Council, and delivered with a multi-million pound new building.

But despite some initial encouraging signs, the school struggled to deliver the necessary improvements.

Like the John Wallis, its catchment area included significant areas of deprivation, and transforming it was never going to be an easy task.

However, after repeatedly finding itself near the bottom of national league tables, the decision was taken for the school to merge with the neighbouring Elleson and Hereson School, and come under the umbrella of the academy which runs it.

LEADER: John McParland

challenging students here and some parents, if they have any problem, they just go running straight to the newspapers."

One high profile recent case was when a student turned up with a haircut like reality TV star Joey Essex - long on top shaved at the back and sides. The school put him in isolation until it grew out as the hairstyle was not in keeping with the school rules.

The national newspapers had a field day. Mr McParland remains unrepentant. Many would agree with him.

Faith in his students to see the light of high aspirations and a broad base of respect, underpin his leadership. Faith underpins his life.

He was 17 when Manchester United came calling. Bob Bishop, the same scout that had discovered George Best, had been watching him play and was impressed. During the four games he'd attended, the budding player, who played down the wing, had netted twice and with both feet.

But when invited for a trial with the team he was forced to turn it down.

Determined to pursue a career as a Catholic priest, he turned down the chance of perhaps playing alongside the legendary Irishman.

"I just couldn't," he says, looking back, "I joined a missionary order, studied theology and philosophy and was about to be ordained but I felt I couldn't do that because of celibacy. I would have loved to have been a priest.

"I'm a practising Catholic but I'm at a Church of England school; we always start assemblies now with a moment of reflection and prayer.

"It is a great privilege to be head of a school like this and stand up and pray for the students, the exams, all of these things and students will ask me to pray for their grandparents for example.

"People couldn't believe I'd leave a Catholic school and join the Anglians," he jokes of the John Wallis' Church of England status.

"We are a Christian community and I run this school and pray exactly as I did at a Catholic school. I don't push my faith on people, but we have the freedom to pray."

With his family in teaching, though, the seed of a future career had already been sown.

He did not turn his back on sport, however.

At university his reputation as a Gaelic footballer only developed. A sport not unlike Australian Rules; tough, challenging,

He played at the very highest level, representing Down, a county side in Ireland, in the National League and played and managed at a top team in London. He was regularly on TV and a big name in Gaelic football circles.

"When I met my wife we were going out to dinner and she thought I was very famous and expected TV cameras there," he quips, "she was rather disappointed when there was nothing."

At one stage he was even recruited to play across the Atlantic in New York.

"I was in New York, being paid $200 a game, and my friend took me to see a banker. He knew I had a degree and wanted to employ me. He said: 'I'd like to make you a millionaire in two years'. I like money and I liked that, but he was on his sixth gin and tonic at lunchtime and I just thought he was going to be dead in six years.

"He isn't," he jokes, "now he owns half of Long Island."

He returned, instead, to London and took up a career in teaching. His degree in philosophy and theology seeing him quickly move up the pecking order,

After moving to Kent to take up the post at the St Simon Stock Catholic School in Maidstone - where he spent nine years - his move to head up the new Ashford academy put him in a post, five years on, he describes as the best he's ever had.

Certainly, strolling through the corridors of the school alongisde him, meeting pupils who have made great progress, put on performances, or simply now aspire to a career where once they would not, is testament to his achievements.

The Marlowe Academy in Ramsgate may have stumbled into a merger after its efforts proved fruitless, but the example of the John Wallis Academy could perhaps be the blueprint for all others to follow.

FRESH: The John Wallis Academy is the top value-added non-selective in Kent

Advertisement Feature

Change Lives... Find out about fostering.

Fostering is possibly one of the most rewarding things you will ever do. Making a real difference to children's lives is a unique and immensely satisfying privilege.

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Next Step Fostering was established 25 years ago by Maureen and Alb Ward – who were foster carers themselves – and therefore had personal experience of caring for vulnerable children. Next Step Fostering remains a family company to this day, with Registered Manager Neil McCarthy, and Director Lesley Ward's involvement with the company stretching back over twenty years.

Next Step provides a range of fostering services through offices in Kent. London and The Thames Valley and work in partnership with many Local Authorities across the South East of England.

A national shortage of foster carers means that children who cannot live with their family are being moved away from their home communities, resulting in a change of school, community, friends and religious contacts. Every day, Next Step receives child referrals from Local Authorities, but due to the high levels of demand, do not have sufficient families to meet the needs of the many children being referred.

As a family run company, Next Step Fostering is able to offer a personal, individual service to its foster carers and children. Supervision, support and training can be tailored to individual needs and foster carers have an open invitation to approach Lesley Ward directly to discuss any issues they may have.

Fostering a child is not an easy task, but it is extremely rewarding – and thanks to the generous allowance Next Step Fostering pays, many people give up unfulfilling jobs to undertake a career in fostering, where they feel they can really make a difference to young lives.

Mary Cattell, an ex-carer herself and now Manager of the Chatham office, said "People often worry that they won't be suitable, based on things they have heard from friends or the media, but I would encourage anyone thinking about fostering to speak to us directly. We can answer all of their questions about the type of people we are looking for and what fostering is like."

If you are considering a career in fostering or simply want to learn more, call into Next Step Fostering's Chatham office, at 85 High Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4EE.

Alternatively you can call the Chatham office on 01634 838666 and speak to a member of their friendly team or visit their website at www.nextstepfostering.org

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Remarkable discovery of plane - 70 years after it went missing

A TV documentary airs this week charting the remarkable tale of a RAF aircraft which crashed not long after take-off on a training flight from Canada. Lost for decades, it was recently found in a forest

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

ON OCTOBER 30, 1942, a twin-engine aircraft, owned by the Royal Air Force, took off from a base in Patricia Bay, British Columbia.

The Canadian airstrip was a hub for Allied troops during the Second World War, an opportunity to get to grips with some of the technology and equipment of wartime craft in order to outwit the enemy.

It should have all been routine as the crew of four airmen took off for navigation training in the Avro Anson L7056.

But when airbourne they flew into trouble. Wind and rain battered the aircraft and it disappeared.

The crew were assumed dead - lost as the craft crashed into the Pacific Ocean. Their bodies or the wreckage never found.

Their names, among them Pilot Officer Charles Fox, listed on the Ottawa Memorial.

However, in 2013, 71 years later, three forestry engineers discovered the wreckage of a plane in woodland in British Columbia.

Upon closer inspection, it was discovered to be the missing Avro Anson Mk1 plane with the remains of its crews still inside.

Now it forms part of a fascinating television documentary - 71 Years: The Loss and Discovery of Avro Anson L7056 which is to be aired on Tuesday. It was down to an acclaimed producer and aviation historian to record the unfolding story over seven long months

They travelled between Alberta and the UK to meet the families of the airmen and finally attending the interment ceremony outside Victoria.

A real horror of the crash was that it eventually emerged the plane went down less than an hour's flight from its military base.

Since the crash site was discovered, the families have at last been given some closure.

Peter Fox (second left in picture), now 77, was not even at school when his father, trainee navigator Charles, disappeared. Although he was too young to remember his father, Mr Fox told us of his shock at discovering the truth at long last.

At his home in Hoo, near Rochester, he said: "I was only just three years old when, on April 9, 1941 Dad volunteered for the RAF.

"So any memories of him at that time are very vague being based mainly on photographs.

"Imagine my surprise when in July of 2014 I received a message from my brother Chris in Manchester to say that the Avro Anson aircraft that Dad had been flying in, in October 1942, had been found on a very wooded mountain side on Vancouver Island in Canada.

"My mother Marion died in 1998, long before it was found. I'm sure she would have been very shocked the plane has been discovered.

"The plane had apparently gone down on an observer training flight with four airmen on board - three British and one Canadian. The relatives of all four men had been traced and contacted; we apparently were the last.

"The aircraft had been found by loggers surveying the forest. There was a second coincidence in that I, my wife Shirley, my two daughters and three of my grandchildren had, during the previous October, been to Ottawa in Canada to view the war memorial with Dad and his colleague's records.

"We were given laminated copies of Dad's war records and informed that there would be a joint burial in the Victoria (Royal Oak) Burial Park in Canada. It was stated that my brother and I were the first direct descendants of a casualty to be found - this is probably due to the fact that dad was 32 when he volunteered; the usual age was around 20 or 21.

"We were flown to Canada along with the senior RAF padre, four members of the Queen's Colour

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PLANE: The Avro Anson Mk1 - similiar to that which the four airmen crashed in more than 70 years ago

Squadron and Sue Raftree, where we met up the family of the Canadian member of the crew and the loggers who found the aircraft remains. The burial service was very well done and very moving; Lewis, one of our grandchildren, laid a wreath on our behalf.

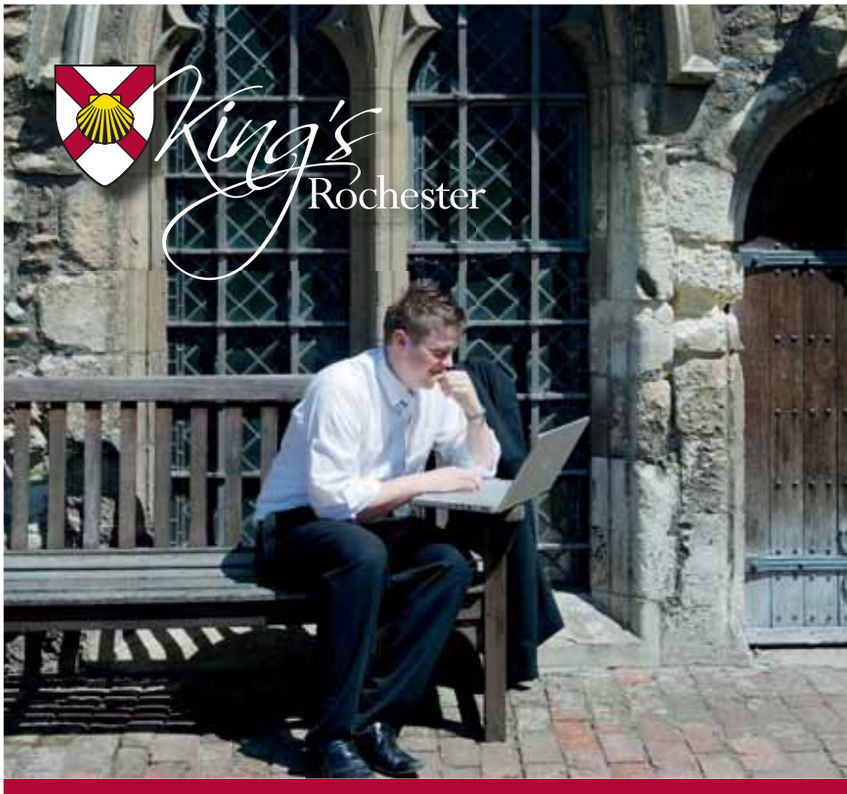
"Probably the greatest impact of the discovery has been the impetus it has given us to discover more about Dad and particularly his time in the RAF in Canada.

"As a family we have communicated more in the last six months than in the previous 50 years. I am also hoping to revisit Vancouver Island and get up to the crash site as we were unable to get up there last time due to weather and scheduling problems.

"The emotional side was very moving, especially during the service; the fact that the remains of four men were buried in one normal coffin took some getting used to.

"Since returning, for me, the main focus has been exchanging news and exploring how it must have been back in the dark days of the war; especially trying to come up with ideas as to how and when the crash occurred was it soon after take-off or later in the flight? They were recalled due to the weather but did not respond. Was it purely due to the weather which according to a letter from one of Dad's colleagues was pretty much the worst he had flown in? Was there equipment failure, human error or a combination of all the above? We will probably never fully know and that is one of the reasons why I want to return to the site."

The documentary will be aired on Forces TV, available via Sky and Virgin, on May 5 at 9pm.



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Are we winning killer bug battle?

After a host of cases of often fatal so-called 'superbugs' in our hospitals, it seems that finally we're turning the corner. But, as **David Powles** explains, the battle may be won, but the war is not over yet

HOSPITALS in Kent have been praised for efforts to successfully tackle superbugs on the wards - but warned any complacency from staff and patients will see the problems return.

The rise of so-called superbugs have dominated the health headlines for the past decade and been linked to hundreds of deaths across the United Kingdom and a number in Kent.

There was particular concern over the spread of two types of infections, commonly known as MRSA and C difficile, increasingly resistant to antibiotics and linked to poor hygiene.

However, our investigation has found that drastic measures have significantly reduced outbreaks.

We looked at hospital figures for the 18 months up to February 2015 for bloodstream infected Meticillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), Clostridium difficile (C difficile) and, the past four years, for bloodstream infected Escherichia coli (E.coli).

While cases are still recorded, they occur on a much less regular basis than at the height of the problems. There has been particular success in reducing cases of bloodstream MRSA, the most serious.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Hospitals Trust has recorded five cases of MRSA in the time frame, but none since June last year.

In terms of C difficile, a potentially serious bacterial infection of the stomach, it consistently records around two to three cases a month.

East Kent Hospitals University, which includes the William Harvey in Ashford and Kent and Canterbury hospitals, recorded eight MRSA cases, but also none since June 2014.

IMPROVING: Medway Maritime in Gillingham is one of a number of our hospitals which has seen a dramatic drop

C difficile cases average around four or five a month, but fell to just seven in total for the four months between November 2014 and February 2015.

Sue Roberts, director, infection prevention and control for East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust, told KoS the trust had been working on a number of ways to lower the infection rate for C difficile.

She said: "Over the last six months we have greatly reduced our clostridium difficile [C.difficile] infection rate. We have introduced a new technology to 'fog' single rooms, bays and wards vacated by patients with resistant organisms. This technology acts as a high level disinfection agent to rid the environment of common bacteria and viruses that can cause infection, particularly in susceptible individuals. We introduced an electronic software communication system to alert the infection prevention and control team to any in-patient suffering with diarrhoea enabling them to follow up in real time and further support the management of these patients. Finally, we introduced simplified assessment/action tools for staff to use in assessing patients with diarrhoea.

"We will continue to innovate new ideas to ensure that we provide the safest care for our patients, keeping infections like C difficile as low as possible."

She told KoS that, despite the innovation, hospitals were fighting a constant battle, and needed to stay vigilant.

Mrs Roberts said: "Hospitals face increasing pressure from the continued emergence of resistant organisms, worldwide, which cannot easily be eradicated from the hospital environment. We can combat infection through practicing effective hand hygiene between patients and after touching contaminated surfaces, keeping the environment clean including fogging, screening patients at risk on admission and ensuring we prescribe antibiotics appropriately."

At Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, which includes Darent Valley, Queen Mary's and Erith and District hospitals, the last MRSA case was more than a year ago and there has been just two in the last year and a half.

C difficile figures range from between one and three a month.

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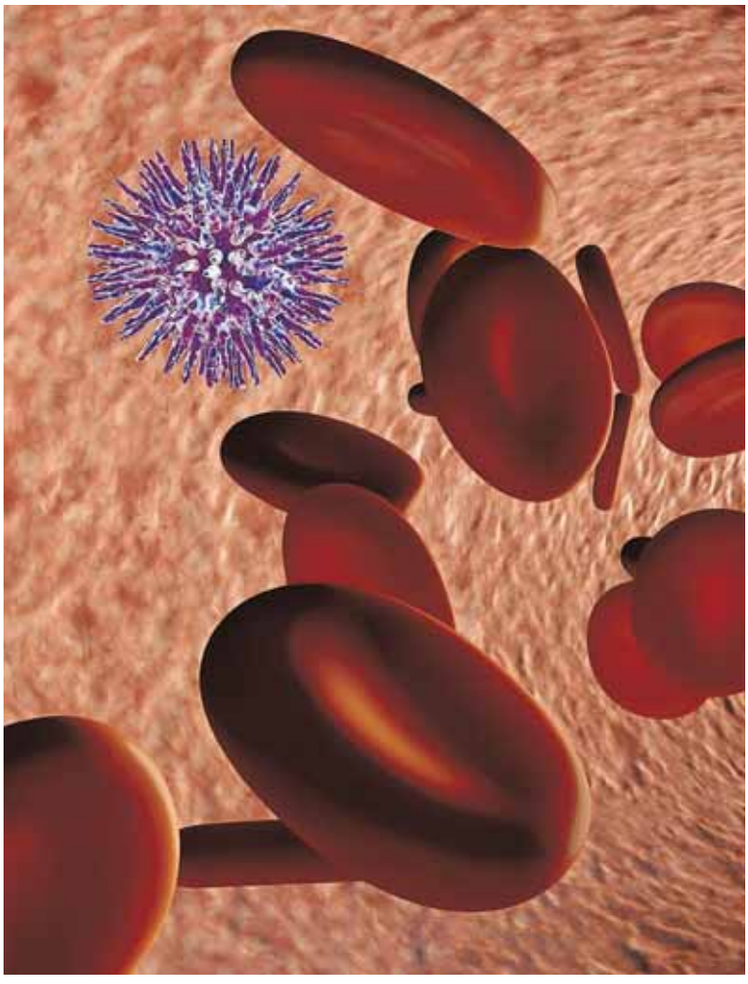

VIRUS: Many of the dangerous germs are linked to poor hygiene

Meanwhile, at Medway NHS Trust, whose main service is the beleaguered Medway Maritime Hospital, there have been just two MRSA cases, with only one or two C difficile cases per month.

Dr Rella Workman, consultant microbiologist and director of infection prevention and control, told KoS the battle against superbugs had been hard fought, with the reduction a result of a number of inititiatives which had been put in place.

Dr Workman said: "We have achieved this through a series of measures, including screening, identification and isolating patients with superbugs, infection control measures to manage those patients identified to be positive and infection control policies and procedures aimed at reducing spread.

"A committed infection control team are also visible on the ward and are able to support staff to follow infection control policies and protocols."

Derek Butler, chair of MRSA Action UK, said: "There has been much improvement but it is a bit disingenuous. Hospitals only have to record MRSA infections that get into the bloodstream. They are often the most serious and can kill, but other MRSA infections, known as surgical site infections, are not included. The concern we have is that is hospitals don't have to record it, you can't control it and it might not be a priority.

"We are campaigning to get these infections included."

The reductions come after a wide-spread national campaign to tackle superbugs on the wards through methods such as screening of patients as they arrive, improved hygiene measures and steps to make the public more aware of the need to stay clean to prevent infection.

Ursula Clarke, assistant chief nurse for Medway NHS Trust, told KoS the trust had put all these measures in place, and was working on new systems to help in the future.

She said: "We have used side rooms when appropriate. When risks, near misses or increases in acquisitions occur, for example MRSA, restrictions are placed on the number of MRSA patients that can be nursed in the middle of a bay within the medical block wards. We have undertaken enhanced cleaning, staff re-training in hygiene competence and increased audit.

"Continual audits and new ways of working will help in the future.

"The antibiotic management team were successful in their bid for 'Microguide' - an application for antibiotic guidelines on smartphones - so in addition to being available on the intranet, it will be delivered to all clinicians via their smart phones."

Our investigations have found, however, that recorded cases of E.coli are on the rise in hospitals. E.coli usually originates from food, but spreads very easily and can cause urinary, kidney and bloodstream infections. It is thought new strains are becoming resistant to antibiotics and therefore spreading.

Hospital bosses claim an increasing number of people are infected with E.coli in the community and bringing it in with them.

At Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells, figures for the past three years show an increase in E.coli bacteraemia cases, when it gets into the blood, with 214 in 2012, 256 in 2013 and 266 last year.

East Kent recorded 434 in 2012, 478 in 2013 and 478 last year. Dartford and Gravesham rose from 170 in 2012, 191 in 2013 and 186 last year.

Medway also rose with 203 in 2012, 221 in 2013 and 270 last year.

Continued on page 27

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Continued from page 25

Mr Butler added: "There is still a problem with other infections. Cases of C difficile and E.coli are still prevalent and we are concerned they are the MRSA of the future if hospitals do not act.

"We don't want people to take their eye off the ball. A lot of medical staff feel they are on top of it and that is often when it can come back to bite you. We are also seeing more cases of infections in the community at places like care homes.

"The government needs to find ways to encourage drug companies to test and develop antibiotics to tackle the emerging infections."

Dr Workman said that whatever is done, superbugs will likely be a problem for many years to come. She said: "The nightingale style wards, bed pressures, the changing workforce, high agency staff use, staff rotas and staff retention all make implementation of infection control policies and procedures a continuous challenge.

"The changing nature of superbugs and their inherent ability to evolve makes total eradication an unlikely event."

THE BUGS

Meticillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

Between 20pc and 40pc of people carry the MRSA bacteria, mostly in the nose or on the skin. MRSA can cause significant infections in deep wounds or if it gets into the bloodstream.

Clostridium difficile (C difficile)

Many of us, particularly women and young children, carry the bacteria harmlessly in our stomachs, but it can become a problem when disrupted by antibiotics, which can kill off other bacteria allowing C difficile to thrive. It produces spores which can travel through the air.

Escherichia coli (E.coli)

Although most strains are harmless, some strains of E. coli are capable of producing powerful toxins that can cause severe illness, especially when it gets in the bloodstream (known as bacteraemia).

The majority of E.coli cases are food-borne though it is believed new and stronger strains are evolving. It can spread very easily and good hygiene is essential to stop it from doing so.

Steps to healthy hygiene in hospitals

PATIENT

1. If you are staying in a hospital, make sure you **clean your hands** after going to the toilet, before and after eating, and at regular intervals.
2. If you are concerned about the hand hygiene of doctors, nurses or anyone else you come into contact with in hospital, you are encouraged to **ask them whether they have cleaned their hands**.
3. Help prevent the spread of infections by **keeping the space around you tidy** and uncluttered so that cleaning staff can access all the surfaces easily.
4. **Do not touch** any wound or device that enters your body.
5. **Shower** as frequently as you can, and **change** into clean clothes **regularly**.
6. **Do not share** personal items or equipment with other patients.

VISITORS

1. When visiting someone in hospital, always **clean your hands** using soap and water or alcohol hand rubs. Do this when you **enter or leave** a patient's room or other areas of the hospital.
2. If you have a cough, cold, diarrhoea, vomiting or any other infectious condition, **contact the ward for advice before visiting**.

STAFF

1. Hospital staff who come into contact with patients should maintain **high standards of hygiene** and take extra care when treating patients with MRSA.
2. Staff should **thoroughly wash and dry their hands** before and after caring for a patient, before and after touching any potentially contaminated equipment or dressings, after bed making and before handling food.
3. **Disposable gloves** should be worn when staff have physical contact with open wounds, for example when changing dressings, handling needles or inserting an intravenous drip.
4. The hospital environment, including floors, toilets and beds, should be kept as **clean and dry** as possible.
5. Patients with a known or suspected MRSA infection should be **isolated**.
6. Patients should only be transferred between wards when this is **strictly necessary.**

Source: NHS Choices

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RIP: Pat Lamb died after falling into the Medway river after a night out

Father's emotional warning of binge drinking dangers

By Molly Kersey
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

THE parents of Pat Lamb, found dead in the River Medway after going missing after a night out with friends, have warned of the dangers of "suicidal" levels of drinking.

The 28-year-old from Greenhithe, sparked a major search after drinking in Maidstone town centre on December 13 last year.

He was last seen walking, apparently extremely drunk, towards the path which runs along the river in the county town.

His body was eventually found, on January 10, at Cuxton Marina.

At an inquest this week, it was revealed he had been drinking for six hours prior to his death. He had consumed around a third of a bottle of port, plus bottles of WKD blue, cider and six Jager bombs before he went missing.

A toxicology report revealed that his blood alcohol level was high enough to make him pass out.

At the inquest into his death, held in Maidstone, the coroner, Patricia Harding, recorded an open verdict.

Although there has been no evidence of foul play, the coroner could not determine how he got into the river. The cause of death was immersion – either by drowning or having a cardiac arrest when in the water.

Speaking after the hearing, his father Tony Lamb said: "People do go out and drink for all sorts of reasons and these days young people tend to get involved in what is really quite suicidal drinking.

"They have no real idea of what they are doing to their bodies and that is a problem."

His son had been out with two friends to mourn the loss of close friend Rob Butler on the night of the tragedy. The coroner said: "This is a very sad loss of life. It's quite clear from the evidence I have heard that Patrick was very well thought of and had very many friends.

"It's a very tragic loss in those circumstances and I am very sorry that the inquest hasn't been able to piece together exactly what happened to Patrick."

A driver next to the A229 at Fairmeadow and a man walking towards the nearby Travel Lodge hotel had both seen a man matching Mr Lamb's description and made reports to the police.

The driver said the man had appeared very drunk, and that he had crossed in front of his car and made his way down the stairs to the footpath.

He said that he would have stopped to check he was all right but could not do this safely.

The man walking back from a nightclub towards the Travelodge said he had seen someone "shouting and waving his arms around in a windmill type action" and behaving "erratically" on the footpath by the river.

Mr Lamb's parents and brother Jamie attended the inquest.

His mother, Sharon Lamb, said: "He was always smiling. I'm really going to miss that smile."

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LOST: Cats and owners are united courtesy of the Cat Chat website which puts animals currently in shelters online to find their perfect match

Thousands of cats are put within a whisker of new life on website

Charity site just for cats is equivalent of feline online dating service as **Mario Chiorando** finds out...

TAKE a quick look at Facebook at any given moment, and you would think that cats are the world's most loved and most revered of all creatures.

Often it seems they replace children in many people's affections.

Yet despite the outpouring of love, many cats struggle to find a loving home, too often the result of unwanted or unexpected litters.

All of which helped inspire the setting up of Cat Chat – an online charity set up in Ramsgate and now serving much of the UK.

Its aim is simple – to unite stray cats with a new owner.

As an online portal it acts as a kind of virtual matchmaker - putting cats in touch with humans wanting to welcome them into the home.

Its motto is 'helping cats out of shelters... and into homes'.

The charity was founded by Mandy Cotton in 2000.

"We are unique in what we do," she explains. "We are a virtual shelter – we don't physically take cats in, we are a resource, listing cats that are looking for new homes from shelters all over. We are expanding all the time, and will host any animal charity providing they neuter animals, and run a home check service before rehoming.

"Lots of the shelters we list on the site don't have their own websites, although some do. We list so many cats – we helped to rehome about 8,000 in 2014.

"We were one of the very first online charities to be registered in the country."

Re-homing abandoned and stray cats is just one side of the equation – a single cat can be responsible for up to 20,000 descendants in just five years if left unneutered – and many pet owners are failing to do just that.

Most charities recommend neutering pets, preventing their ability to reproduce.

Katya Mira, south east spokeswoman from the RSPCA, said: "Recent research carried revealed that 85 per cent of litters are a mistake. This is mainly because people don't realise that cats can get pregnant from as young as four months, while they are still kittens themselves.

"Allowing your cat to be spayed or snipped also saves your cat from health risks. Females are susceptible to disease from mating, and Tom cats who haven't been snipped are more likely to wander off and get into fights which can lead to them getting FIV and other diseases."

FIV, or Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, is often considered the cat equivalent of HIV. Passed through scratching or biting, it can be fatal in cats, and remain dormant for years.

A vaccine is available but it does not offer a reliable form of protection for all cats. Thus prevention is the best cure - normally by preventing your cat getting into fights.

The RSPCA spokeswoman added "There is a romanticised myth that cats should be allowed to have at least one litter of kittens, but cats aren't like people and don't choose to get pregnant like we do.

"Our research showed pet owners found the reality of having these kittens is not what they imagined and the overwhelming response at that point from cat owners was 'never again'."

Among the patrons of Cat Chat is Suzy Gale, wife of Sir Roger Gale, the long-serving MP who is standing as the Conservative candidate in the upcoming general election for Thanet North.

She is currently working with the group to promote the cause of older cats, who are often ignored in favour of their younger counterparts when it comes to rehoming.

"Every poor little kitten and cat deserves a chance."

She adds: "There are so many desperately sad stories – some cats end up homeless because their elderly owners die.

"We have one cat here who my son brought from Hounslow. Someone moved out of their house, and just left the cat behind. The neighbours had been feeding her, but she was very timid. Eventually my son managed to catch her, and we took her in."

Many people are put off by the cost of neutering, but Mrs Gale says: "It is not necessarily expensive, as sometimes charities will offer the service for free, or local vets will offer very reasonable rates.

"The Blue Cross in Cliftonville will generally try to help. Many charities are trying hard, but this is an annual problem, which isn't helped by the animals people abandon or dump because of cost or other reasons.

"What many don't realise is that cats are for life – like dogs, you should be ready to take on that responsibility."

Many people do not realise there is a kitten season – and it is a long one.

It can start in March, depending on the weather, and lasts into the autumn. With cats having large litters of around five or six kittens, sanctuaries can quickly become overwhelmed by the sheer number of baby animals.

During this time, while many people choose to adopt kittens, many older or more timid cats get overlooked, but in fact there are advantages to adopting an older cat.

HOME: Suzy Gale and a number of her feline friends

Sharon Weller is a rehoming and welfare assistant working with cats at Battersea in Brands Hatch – part of the famous Battersea Dogs and Cats Home.

She says: "We always recommend that people come here with as open a mind as possible, and if you do have a specific type of cat in mind, it might be better choosing an adult.

"This is because cats' characters don't develop until they are about four-years-old. If you know you want a lap cat, and you get a young kitten who is very friendly, there is a chance you could end up with a totally different type of cat once he or she has grown up.

"What we really try and do is make sure that a cat is suitable for a prospective owner's lifestyle and expectations."

The Gales share their home with a number of dogs, and with five cats. The cats are all rescue animals.

"People often misunderstand cats," Mrs Gale says. "They really are the most wonderful creatures, and it's very rewarding to take on older animals. People sometimes think they are aloof and independent, but they are usually very friendly and loving.

"I do understand that people want a young cat, or kitten, but it really is worth giving an older cat a home too."

Ms Cotton says having the MP and his wife as patrons of the charity has been immensely helpful.

" They have a great network of people and contacts, so if you have a question they can't answer, they will generally know someone who can

"I also think having patrons likes the Gales adds credibility – they wouldn't be supporting us unless we were a good cause."

See www.catchat.org.

FANTASY: The park will be the size of Disneyland Paris and feature sections such as Port Bay

FLOATING: Port Plaza appears to show a floating boat

Theme park offers fresh glimpse into the future

It is one of the most exciting proposals ever for the county – an enormous tourist attraction creating thousands of jobs and pulling in millions. **Maria Chiorando** examines the latest developments...

DEVELOPERS of the multi-billion pound London Paramount Resort have released a string of striking new images of the attraction as it embarks on the latest stage of an extensive consultation process.

It is hoped the park, which, if all goes to plan will open by 2020, will be sited on a former cement works on the Swanscombe peninsula - midway between Gravesend and Dartford.

London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) is hoping to create a complex which is part theme park, part entertainment venue, part commercial and part destination.

It will cost around £2bn to complete and, if all goes to plan, create some 27,000 new jobs.

It is predicted to become one of northern Europe's biggest tourist attractions.

The latest artist impressions show the resort will contain a number of themed zones, with a host of rides and attractions.

They were released to coincide with the start, on Wednesday, of a string of 10 consultation events taking place across Dartford and Gravesham. They conclude on May 14.

The consultations will outline transport link opportunities, which include harnessing the Thames and exploiting the potential of the Ebbsfleet International high-speed rail link.

Those attending the events will also see a 3D model of the park.

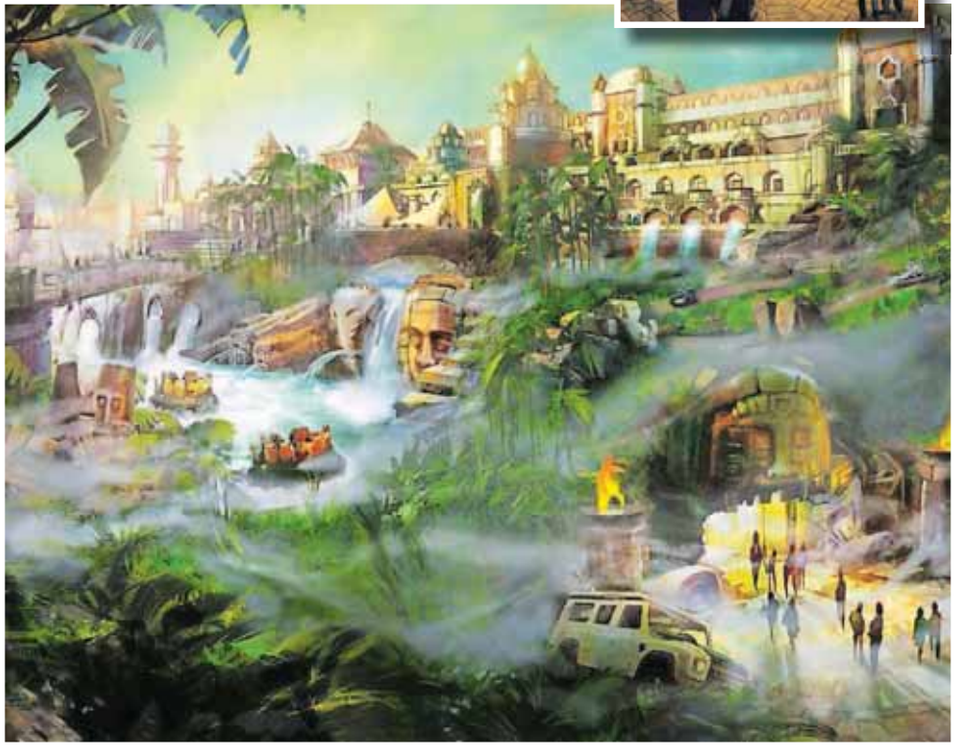
It has signed a licensing deal with movie studio Paramount to use a host of its trademarks – among them the right to film branding like Star Trek, Mission: Impossible and Titanic.

Additional deals have been signed with the likes of the BBC to ensure a heavy dose of British characters too.

A spokesman said: "Late afternoon every day the Paramount and Friends Carnival is planned to take place. Also in the evening, there will be a chance to enjoy a West End quality production at one of our theatres, indoor or outdoor venues.

"The heart of the Entertainment Resort will open to the public in Easter 2020, with additional rides and attractions scheduled to be unveiled soon after in the following years."

LEGENDS: If all goes to plan, the park will open in just five years time



WATER: Rides are featured in this striking image

Killer dog disease warning after spate of incidents across the UK

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

VETS are urging dog owners in the county not to panic after 52 pets have died from the a rare condition.

In all, there have been 103 suspected case of CRGV – known as Alabama Rot – but only the 52 have so far been confirmed.

They are spread across wide parts of the UK, but none have been in Kent so far. The cause of the illness, which can cause kidney failure and skin lesions, remains a mystery.

Ian Johnson runs the Sandhole Veterinary Centre in Snodland, near Rochester.

He told us: "Owners still need to be on the lookout for anything suspicious with their pets and if they are at all concerned, take them to your vet.

"Little is known about this disease, but it does need to be a concern.

"It can start as a relatively innocuous skin condition and turns rapidly into a fatal kidney disease.

"The fact we don't know a lot about it is a little more worrying. Early treatment can give better hope for a full recovery."

Michelle Bevan, rehoming and welfare manager at Battersea Brands Hatch, said: "While instances of Alabama Rot are still relatively low, the best advice we can offer dog owners is to practice vigilance: if your dog develops sore looking lesions on its legs, feet or face, then do take it to the vet immediately."

It had been unknown in the UK until 2012 but was known to have affected dogs in the US since the 1980s. Cases have subsequently been reported in the New Forest, Cornwall, Dorset, Surrey, Worcestershire and County Durham.

John Foster, a vet who runs the Amber House Partnership in Canterbury, told us: "If owners allow their dogs to run free in woodland, they need to check them very thoroughly at the end of every walk.

"They need to check their pads, legs and underside to see if there is any damage. If they are a bit muddy they need to be cleaned and then, very importantly, dried thoroughly.

> **"It can start as a relatively innocuous skin condition and turns rapidly into a fatal kidney disease. The fact we don't know a lot about it is a little more worrying."**
>
> **Ian Johnson,**
> Sandhole Veterinary Centre

"We do not yet know the cause of this condition, but owners need to take all the steps they can to prevent it.

"If they do see lesions and are worried, they should take their pet to a vet as a matter of urgency."

After the first cases were reported in the New Forest, it sparked concerns there had been an environmental trigger.

The Forestry Commission says it is aware of the possible link, but stressed there had been no proof of any link.

A spokesman said: "Although reports come from people who have walked their dog in the countryside, the cause of the disease remains unknown.

"Many thousands of dogs are walked in the countryside every day and it is important to remember that only a very small number of dogs have been affected.

"Most skin lesions will not be caused by this disease and most cases of kidney failure will have another cause.

"Because the cause remains unknown we do not want to give the impression that some areas are safer than others indeed there may not be an environmental trigger."

THREAT: Dog walkers urged to be on the look out

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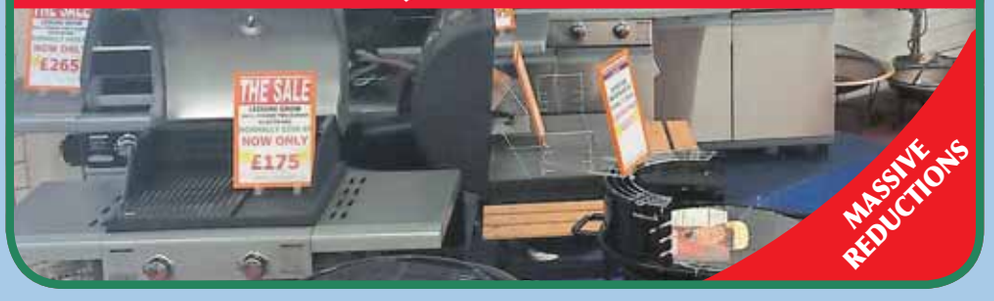

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Tributes to former borough and county leader Frank Gibson

By Molly Kersey
Molly.Kersey@archant.co.uk

DESCRIBED as 'one of life's true gentlemen', family and friends have paid tribute to the former chairman of Kent County Council.

Frank Gibson was in his eighties when he passed away last week,

He was elected to the council in 1985 and took up the role of chairman in 2004.

He was honoured as both alderman and freeman of the borough and was awarded an OBE for his services to Kent County Council in 1994.

Mr Gibson was also mayor and council leader of Gravesham Borough Council during his life.

Taking great pride in Gravesham and the people who live there, he played a significant role in local politics and town improvements throughout his extensive career.

He was devoted to his family and is survived by his seven children, 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

His son, Richard Gibson, said: "He was an energetic sort of a man.

"He was 89 when he died and that morning he had been digging in the garden and throwing his little grandson up in the air.

"He was known as a very spirited sort of a man.

"He was well known about town and he was very sociable."

Speaking about his father's death, Mr Gibson explained: "It was a cough that just got worse and worse.

"It was very sudden. He got an infection and it turned into pneumonia and it just took him over, but it was very quick and peaceful, everyone was there with him."

He said that local government had been his father's main passion during his life.

Mr Gibson worked hard to establish Gravesham Borough Council in 1972, and after being the leader of the council for several years he served as the mayor of Gravesham twice.

"He was very much a Conservative councillor," his son explained.

"He was on the council for years but was very friendly with people on both sides and he was a big personality, there's no two ways about that.

"He was a very dedicated person and got things done."

Mr Gibson played a large role in the establishment of the St George's shopping centre in Gravesend and the North West Kent Enterprise Zone.

He was passionate about the areas of Cobham and Luddesdowne, having lived there for many years.

POPULAR: Frank Gibson had been committed to local government

He played a leading part in protecting Luddesdowne from proposed military use and fought successfully to have the 14th century Cobham College converted into retirement homes.

"He had a big role in extending it," his son explained.

As well as his service to the community through public sector work, Mr Gibson was also a trustee at local charities including the Elizabeth Higgins Cottages Charity Trust – which helps to home ex-servicemen and their families.

His enthusiasm for education led to him becoming chairman of governors at Gravesend Grammar School for Boys, the school that he attended as a child, and a governor of Ilfield School - which works with students with special needs.

Although Mr Gibson's impressive career saw him travel abroad, his heart remained in Gravesend and he always returned.

"We grew up in Africa. He was in the Foreign Office, and it was known as colonial service at the time," his son explained.

"He was posted to Uganda and became a district commissioner. He was there until he came back to Gravesend."

He remained passionate about local issues until the end, and had been working to establish a museum detailing the town's rich history shortly before his death.

Chief executive of Gravesham Borough Council David Hughes said: "Frank made an enormous contribution to the work of the borough council and Kent County Council over many years and was most certainly one of life's true gentlemen.

"It is most fitting that in being made an honorary freeman of the borough he was awarded the greatest honour the borough council can bestow.

"He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered for many years to come.

"All our thoughts with will be with his family and close friends at this sad time."

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Revealed: Truth about Lusitania

When the Lusitania liner was torpedoed with the loss of more than 1,200 passenger lives in 1915, it would become a defining moment. But, as **Chris Murphy** reports, a Kent author duo believe they have finally discovered the truth...

IT WAS a First World War tragedy that shook the world, and made the name Lusitania a byword for atrocity.

Once the world's largest passenger liner, the Cunard vessel had set off from Liverpool to New York, with more than 1,200 passengers when it was sunk after being torpedoed by a German U-boat.

Now a book on the loss of the liner has been refreshed to mark the centenary of the sinking and questions why passengers were still being transported on a ship apparently carrying ammunition for the war effort, something that has always been denied by the authorities.

Rochester driving instructor Mitch Peeke along with Dartford taxi driver Steve Jones were moved by the incident so much, they combined to write The Lusitania Story: The Atrocity That Shocked The World.

Mr Peeke said they now have proof munitions were on board and were a primary reason for the rapid 18-minute sinking.

He told us: "This is an updated edition of my original 2002 published book.

"This version not only tells the complete story of this most famous liner, it also closely examines why she was lost in a mere 18 minutes after being hit by just a single torpedo from a German U Boat, with the loss of 1,202 lives, on May 7 1915.

"It also examines why the British authorities were so keen to blame the liner's master, Captain Turner, for the disaster, when it was clearly an act of war.

"Prior to the First World War, the Lusitania and her sister ship, Mauretania, were the fastest passenger ships on the North Atlantic.

"But these two sisters had a secret. They'd been built with government money and a condition of that was that in time of war, they would be requisitioned for use as armed merchant cruisers. Ultimately, they didn't have the range for such usage, but Lusitania, in common with other British ships, was given a very important job to do.

"By the beginning of 1915, it had become obvious that the war wasn't going to be over by any foreseeable Christmas. It was also obvious that the British Army in France was firing more shells per month than Britain's armaments factories were making. Britain needed munitions urgently and turned to America.

"The only way to get these US made munitions to Britain was across the Atlantic. A regular cargo ship took 10 days to make the crossing and was highly likely to be targeted by the U-Boats. The two Cunarders took half that time and outwardly were passenger ships. Henceforth, they and many other liners such as those of the White Star Line, were used to transport munitions, as well as passengers. All had been going well, till May 7, 1915.

"Now 13 years after my first book, many other things have come to light about this most controversial disaster. The British authorities have steadfastly denied she was carrying munitions. Her original cargo manifest had been locked away, safe from prying eyes, ever since the ship sank.

"In December 2012, after 15 years of detective work, I finally tracked it down. It had been in President Roosevelt's personal archive since January 1940. After some final transatlantic negotiations, I obtained a certified copy and the necessary permissions to make this particular historical Holy Grail publicly available.

"The torpedo had hit the forward cargo hold, right where the 1,248 crates of shells, four shells per crate, had been stacked and the mighty Lusitania's fate was sealed.

Mr Peeke is closely involved with the Lusitania Historical Society and Mr Jones is a member of the society.

The Lusitania Story: The Atrocity That Shocked The World Updated Centenary Edition by Mitch Peeke, Steve Jones, and Kevin Walsh-Johnson is £12.99 ISBN: 978147382701.

New York Tribune

900 Die as Lusitania Goes to Bottom;
400 Americans on Board Torpedoed Sh
Washington Stirred as When Maine

CAPITAL AROUSED, SITUATION GRAVEST YET FACED IN WAR

GREATLY FEARS LOSS OF AMERICANS

GERMANS TOAST "VICTORY" AMID "BOCKS" IN CAFES

LONDON SEES VITAL QUESTION FOR U. S.

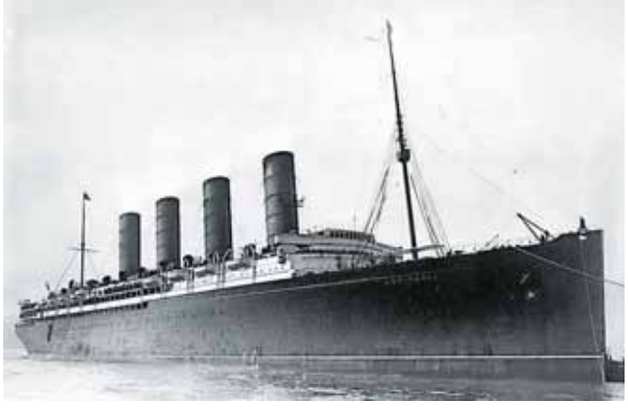
MANY NOTED NEW YORKERS ON LUSITANIA

ACT OF BARBARITY, SAYS F. R. COUDERT

FIRST SURVIVORS' NAMES RECEIVED

ATLANTIC OCEAN

SHOCK: How news broke of the tragedy in the US



SUNK: The RMS Lusitania

THE WRECK

THE remains of the Lusitania lie just off the coast of Ireland.

It is one Mr Peeke has close connections to. He explains: "We have enjoyed the full and continued support of an American businessman, Gregg Bemis, who actually owns the wreck of the liner.

"Gregg is also a technical diver and has spent years and a small fortune, surveying the wreck.

"In 2008, Gregg's explorations uncovered some of the three million rifle bullets in her cargo hold. With his finds and our certified manifest, we can now prove she was carrying munitions.

"But the bullets were just the tip of the iceberg. She was also carrying 5,000 live artillery shells in her forward hold.

"Unfortunately for those aboard the ship that fateful day, a combination of ill-luck and a miscalculation on the part of U20's captain, the one torpedo he fired hit the liner in the only place the underwater missile could render fatal damage to such a well found ship."

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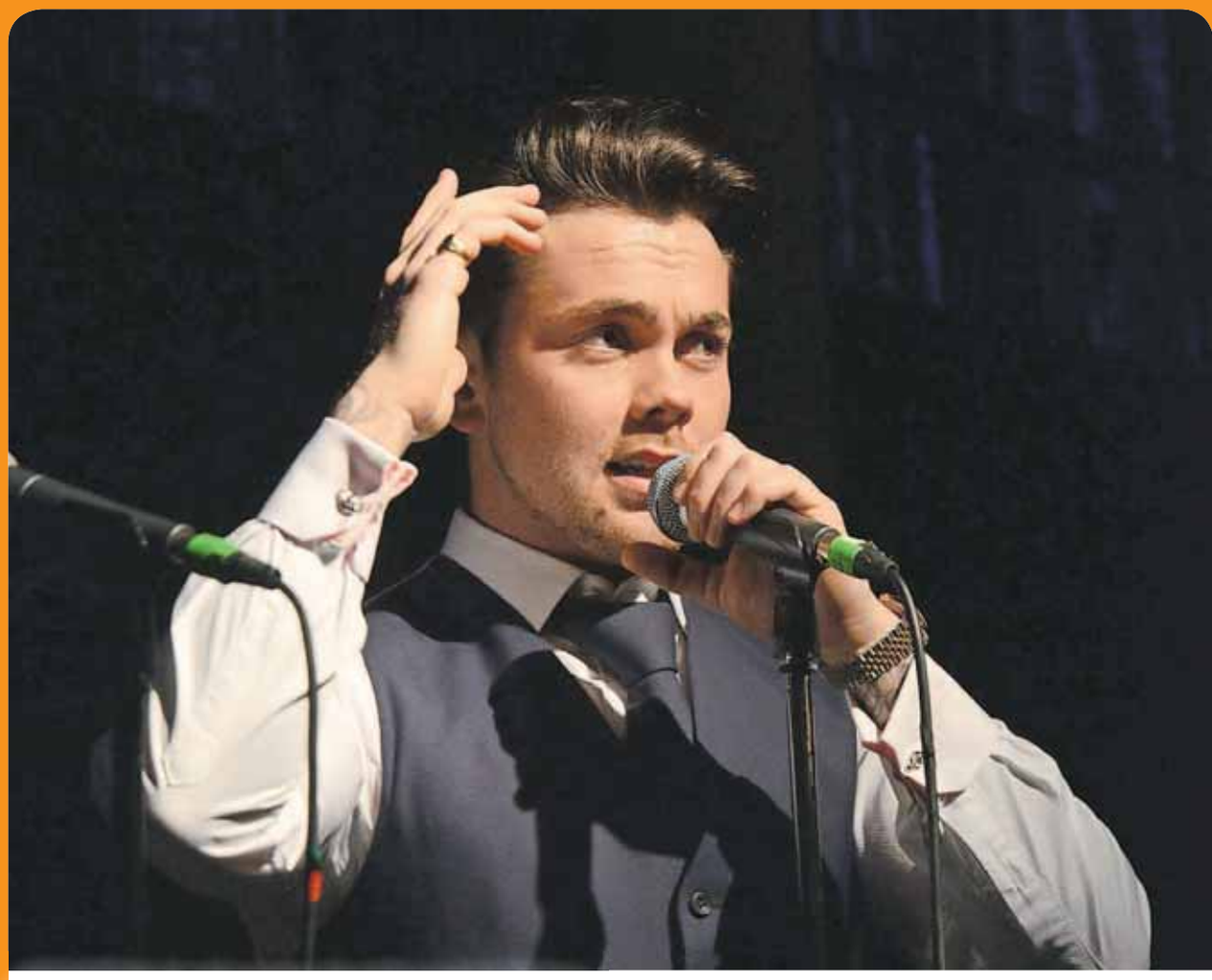

SMOOTH: The singer has grown up since taking part in the X Factor

Ray Quinn puts X Factor behind him for new tour

Molly Kersey talks to the talented performer about life after reality TV show

WHEN he was just a teenager, Ray Quinn was catapulted into the national spotlight after becoming a favourite in the third series of reality TV show The X Factor.

He came second to Leona Lewis, signing with Simon Cowell's record label Sony BMG.

His first album, Doing It My Way, shot straight to number one in the charts and went platinum.

Despite being subsequently dropped from the label in 2007, things didn't slow down for him.

As an actor, singer and dancer, the star has plenty of strings to his bow.

He appeared in West End shows Dirty Dancing, Grease and Legally Blonde and became something of a TV personality after winning the fourth series of Dancing on Ice in 2009 and the All Stars series in 2014.

He has returned to making music and now his new tour, Dare to Dream, will be making its way to the Woodville Theatre, Gravesend, on May 24.

"It's a pre-album tour," he explained.

"I have been in the studio over the last 10 to 12 months making music, all brand new stuff.

"I just wanted to get out on the road and perform it and see what my fans thought and bring them up to date."

And he said that the music he is making now is nothing like his 2007 debut swing album, Doing It My Way.

"It's completely different," he said.

"The swing stuff was what I grew up with, I was a young child and it got me into music.

"This time around it's bringing myself right up to date in the pop scene with a bit of soul and Motown in there.

"I'm now doing songs that I'm writing from my experiences and through maturity in the industry.

"It's not too far away from what people know, but I wanted to make the music I wanted to make and make the choices I wanted to make.

"It's taking myself towards a new direction, creating songs that move people and reaching out to a wider demographic."

And he said the return to making music has been natural.

"Being in the studio makes me feel right at home," he said.

His year is going to be jam packed, with an album release, tour and the release of his book – This Time Around.

As well as performing his music tour he will also be starring in The Judy Garland Song Book – which is set to hit the stage in a couple of months, and features the star's daughter.

"There's going to be a few crossovers," he said.

"There will be a couple of weekends when I am going to be gigging and doing my own tour and then performing in the Judy Garland Song Book in the week, but I don't mind hard work.

"It's all going very well so fingers crossed it continues."

Mr Quinn will be performing at The Woodville at 7.30pm.

The show takes places on May 24.

To find out more about the performance, or to buy tickets, you can visit the website www.woodville.co.uk.

Alternatively call the Woodville Theatre box office on 08442 439 480.

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The Japanese drummers who reach to the 'dawn of history'

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THE YAMATO Drummers of Japan will bring their brand new show Bakuon to Leas Cliff Hall Folkestone this month.

Bakuon takes the ancient art of Japanese Taiko Drumming and brings it bang up-to-date in an display of expertise and athleticism.

The Yamato Company was founded in 1993 in Japan's Kansai region by artistic director Masa Ogawa, who explains the company's ethos: "Taiko is a musical instrument deeply familiar to every Japanese person.

"Since the dawn of history, Taiko's rich reverberations have filled people with inspiration and encouragement in a wide range of settings.

"Its unmistakable sound is still heard throughout Japan today.

"We, the members of Yamato, believe in the unique value of Taiko.

"We are committed to preserving its traditions and exploring new possibilities for this majestic instrument.

"Our goal is to create ever more opportunities for the boom of Taiko to resound worldwide."

ENERGETIC: The display is very athletic

The full show involves about 30 people.

Ogawa says: "We have drums ranging from 30cm in diameter to one that weighs 500kg.

"It's made from the trunk of a 400-year-old oak tree that has been hollowed out with cow skin stretched across either end.

"Taiko has spiritual origins in the ancient Buddhist Temples of Japan. We remain true to those.

"As a company we eat together, live together, do everything together because when we perform, we want to perform as one.

"Sometimes there may be arguments but then we understand each other so we share an understanding of how each other plays and are as people.

"We're like a family really.

"Other Taiko groups live separately and just meet to perform but that is not our way.

"We believe everything is sacred and so we do everything 100 per cent."

The Yamato Drummers of Japan bring Bakuon to the Leas Cliff Hall on Folkestone on May 11.

For more information, call the box office on 0844 871 3015.

You can also visit the website at atgtickets.com/folkestone.

Not just clowning around

THE Netherlands National Circus will be performaning at Dunorlan Park in Tunbridge Wells on May 14.

Tickets cost between £12 and £26. Visit www.ticketmaster.co.uk for more information.

Sun, sea, sand and songs

THE DEAL Festival will run from June 26 until July 12, and will feature a variety of cultural activities, including lots of musical events.

Tickets for the festival go on sale on May 11 at The Astor Theatre in Deal, for more information, call the box office on 01304 370220 or visit www.astor.org.

Time off campaign trail

COMEDIAN and candidate for South Thanet Al Murray will be performing an election night gig at the Orchard Theatre in Dartford.

Tickets cost £26, for more information call 01322 220000.

Chuckling in Chatham

THE LAUGHING Boy comedy club returns to the Brook Theatre in Chatham.

The performance takes place on June 11 at 7.45pm.

Tickets cost £11.

For more information about the show, or to buy tickets, visit the website at www.medwayticketslive.co.uk.

A brush with puppet Basil

FAMOUS fox Basil Brush will appear at the Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone on August 28.

Tickets cost between £13.40 and £16.90.

For more information, visit www.atgtickets.com.

A giggle and a pint of ale

THE OLD Brewery Store in Faversham will host a comedy club on May 7, which is a platform for local, up and coming comedians to showcase their talent.

Tickets cost £5 and are available to purchase by calling 01795 542285 and in person at the Shepherd Neame brewery

Battle of the machines

BASED on the television programme, Robot Wars the tour will come to Maidstone Leisure Centre on October 17.

Tickets cost £16.

For more information, visit www.seetickets.com.

The joy of dance and song

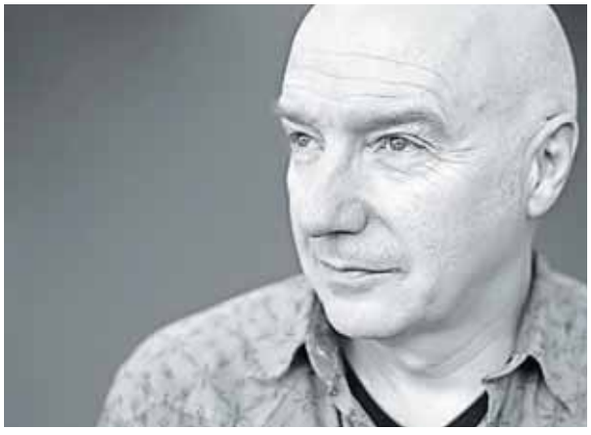
DIRTY Dancing the musical will be coming to Swanley Park on June 15.

The musical is adapted from the classic 1987 movie, which starred Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey.

Tickets start at £12.50. For more information, or to buy tickets, visit www.seetickets.com.

Scottish rocker Midge Ure revisits Celtic roots

By Maria Chiorando
maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk



MIDGE Ure, co-writer of smash hit single Do They Know It's Christmas? will be performing in Kent this month.

Over a 40 year career, the Scottish rocker has fronted Ultranox as well as playing with bands like Thin Lizzy. He is co-organiser of Band Aid, Live Aid and Live 8 with Bob Geldof

Now he is describing his new tour as a return to 'his Celtic roots', where he will perform songs from his album Breathe as well as his hit singles including Vienna.

A spokesman said: "In 1995, Midge delivered his fourth solo album, Breathe, just 10 years after the phenomenal successes of Band Aid and Live Aid.

"Always one to ring the changes, this album had a very Celtic feel with a plethora of acoustic instruments from uilleann pipes to mandolins and accordions alongside Midge's trademark soaring electric guitar riffs.

"The title track was picked up by Swatch watches and headed their most successful advertising campaign ever.

"The album went triple platinum and was a massive success all over Europe.

"After the successful reformation of Ultravox in 2009, Mr Ure feels it's time to revisit his Celtic roots, and will perform Breathe in its entirety for the first time in 2015."

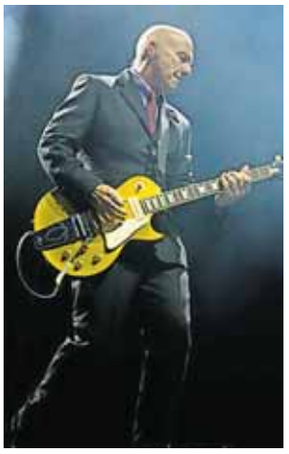
He is also expected to play a selection of his other hits like Dancing with Tears in My Eyes, Fade to Grey and If I Was, as well as songs from his recently released album Fragile, which was Radio 2 playlisted.

Midge Ure and the India Electric Co will perform at the Gulbenkian Theatre on May 17 at 7.30pm.

Tickets cost£18.

For more information and to buy tickets, you can visit the theatre's website at www.thegulbenkian.co.uk.

You can also call the Gulbenkian Theatre box office on 01227 769075.



SEASONED: Ure has been performing for more than 40 years

POWERFUL: Midge Ure and India Electric

Why passion is the key ingredient to success...

Food blogger Natasha Corrett talks about food, work, and her interior designer mother Kelly Hoppen

IF YOU'RE giving your home a clear-out this spring, Natasha Corrett wants you to spare a thought for your kitchen.

"We spring clean our wardrobes and chuck out all the old clothes we don't want to wear any more," says the chef and food blogger. "I do a bit of a cull in my kitchen and find things I don't really need. The amount of times I've gone through my drawers and found measuring spoons broken in half, blunt knives..."

The author of the Honestly Healthy blog and cookbooks, offering tips and recipes for health-conscious foodies, Ms Corrett knows a thing or two about kitchens. In fact, she's currently helping her mum, celebrity interior designer and former Dragon's Den investor Kelly Hoppen, to design the functionality of her new one.

Ms Hoppen has been "an amazing mentor" to the chef, whose father is restaurateur Graham Corrett.

"My mum said to me, 'As long as you're passionate about what you do, you'll succeed, because that's what's going to get you through those late nights and early mornings and working on the weekend', and she was right. You never want to say your mum's right, but she was!"

The pair work out of the same office in London, but Ms Corrett insists it isn't too close for comfort.

"I'm always out and about, recipe-developing or filming, so it's maybe once every two weeks that we'll have lunch together," she says. "It's quite nice to have each other and have a cuddle if we're feeling stressed, stuff like that."

DEDICATED: Natasha Corrett says passion is essential in her career

Busy Ms Corrett – an advocate of the alkaline diet, which involves eating mainly alkaline foods for the optimum pH balance – has also teamed up with Currys PC World to create new recipes based on some of the most popular foods and kitchen appliances on social media (with papaya, roasted aubergine and pomegranates getting people talking and sharing snaps).

She confesses to the occasional evening "sitting in front of the TV and watching EastEnders", tucking into her "guilty pleasure, a proper good old-fashioned pizza".

"My whole philosophy is my 70-30 rule. So 70% of the time, you follow the alkaline way, 30% of the time you do whatever you want, whether it be eating meat, having a chocolate brownie, or a glass of wine or a cocktail," she adds.

With 120,000 Instagram followers and 26,000 on Twitter, Ms Corrett's approach to healthy eating has been a hit. As well as the health factor, her recipes are often very simple too, so there really is no excuse!

She loves nothing more than getting messages from fans online who have tried out her methods.

"When you're at home working away creating things, you can forget that there's a whole world out there about to try these recipes," she says. "When people take photos and upload them, and tell you how easy it was and how delicious they were, it really makes it worthwhile."

Bugsy steals the show

CHILDREN'S gangster musical Bugsy Malone comes to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall between August 20 and 22.

This musical version of the 1976 Alan Parker/David Puttnam film which starred Scott Baio and Jodie Foster is cast with children.

Tickets cost £11.90

For more information, you can visit www.allgigs.co.uk.

Interactive orchestra

CONDUCTOR Mariss Jansons presents a programme of music by Bartók, Ravel and Shostakovich during a live broadcast of the Berliner Philharmoniker.

This broadcast from Berlin will be screened at the Cinema in Canterbury's Gulbenkian.

Tickets cost £10.

For more information, visit the venue's website at www.thegulbenkian.co.uk.

That Manhattan Magic

ON JUNE 19 the auditorium at the Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells will be transformed into an intimate cabaret space for performances by jazz and blues musicians Manhattan Magic and Groove Agents.

The music starts at 8pm.

For more information, you can visit the theatre's website at www.trinitytheatre.net, or call the box office on 01892 678678.

That'll Be The Day

RETRO touring show That'll Be The Day comes to the Stag Community Arts Centre and Theatre in Sevenoaks on June 24.

The rock 'n' roll show features hits of the 50s, 60s and 70s. The musical, first performed in 1986, takes its name from the 1957 Buddy Holly song.

For more information, visit ww.stagsevenoaks.co.uk or call 01732 450175.

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Honouring the fallen of Gallipoli

TRAVEL REVIEW: Gallipoli

By Chris Wiltshire

THERE'S some corner of a foreign field that will always be close to my heart.

It's a parched piece of scrubland, littered with fir cones, overlooking a glorious turquoise bay, and just about as far removed from the stereotypical images of the mud-laden First World War as you could possibly get.

And yet it was here, on the scorching banks of the Dardanelles Strait in northern Turkey, almost a hundred years ago to the day, that my grandfather – and indeed my very existence - hung by the most delicate of threads.

Fighting alongside the Gloucester 7th battalion in the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign, Albert Wiltshire – known to all as Bert, was cut down by a Turkish bayonet in hand-to-hand combat and left for dead.

Just days earlier he had been "blown sky-high by a mortar shell", according to a letter sent to his brother, Graham, but this time, there seemed no hope for him. Bert lay injured with a gaping wound to his side and didn't move.

He had survived the opening skirmishes of the Great War at Mons and Le Cateau in France in August 1914 as part of the British Expeditionary Force, but it looked as though his number was up.

However, 24 hours after the battle, as the orderlies were picking up the dead, one of them noticed Bert's eyes flicker and summoned for help. Miraculously, he was still alive.

It took him months to recover but, although only 5ft 3in tall, Bert was as tough as the old boots he used to repair as a cobbler, and he rejoined the army in Baghdad and Salonica.

He was one of very few Tommies from the original army to have survived the Great War. He was my hero.

Like many of the war veterans, Bert suffered from the debilitating effects of shell shock and mustard gas and slipped away while I was still in short trousers.

Now, 40 years on, I felt it my duty to retrace his steps, to make some sense of the sacrifice of the 56,000 Allies (and almost identical number of Turks), who never came home from that campaign. I wanted to picture where he had fought and to be able to tell my children, and perhaps grandchildren, about it.

Our tour party to the Gallipoli peninsula – a four-hour coach journey from the centre of bustling Istanbul – is dominated by Antipodeans, many combining a trip to the battlefields as part of a once-in-a-lifetime tour of Europe's famous cities and landmarks.

Refreshingly, there are four twentysomethings in the group wanting to pay their respects. None of them have an old relative to honour, but simply feel the need to be there.

One of the more worldly-wise Aussies in our party, Sandra, from Melbourne, tells me in hushed tones that many feel it's their "rite of passage" and that, after declining interest in the war in the 1980s and 90s, youngsters are now flying over to Gallipoli "in their droves".

In fact, so many wanted to visit Gallipoli and take part in official commemorative services on the 100th anniversary of Anzac Day that a ballot had to be held a year ago to restrict numbers.

A part of me wishes more British youngsters felt the same need.

As we reach Anzac Cove, excited chatter quickly gives way to hushed reflection.

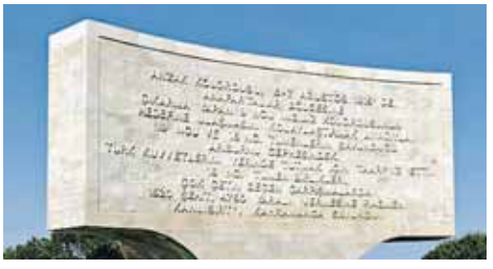
The story goes that a ship carrying Aussie soldiers missed its landing spot, the aptly named Cape Helles, because of high winds and strong current, and pitched up at a beach several miles away.

Under the cover of darkness, dozens of soldiers tried to make their way up the impossibly steep bank to confront the enemy and were mowed down by machine gun fire.

Grisly reminders of the fearsome fighting still litter the peninsula, including ivy-covered trenches so close to each other that you could throw something from one side to the other.

The night before the tour, I'd booked into the beachside Iris Hotel, a few miles from Canakkale, and watched, with an icy beer in hand, as huge oil-laden tankers carved their way through the perilous deep-blue Dardanelles waters. I could just make out the Helles Memorial statue and Turkish flag some two miles away.

I just wish my grandfather and some of his brave pals had been there to see it so that I could raise a toast and thank them. They may have lost the battle, but their efforts were, ultimately, oh so worth it.



STRIKING: The attractive landscape lies in stark contrast to Gallipoli's bloody history

TRAVEL FACTS

■ Chris Wiltshire was a guest of Direct Traveller (0844 414 3071; directtraveller.com) who offers a five-day tour from £315pp, including B&B accommodation, transport, entrance fees, guide and three lunches/one dinner.

:: Atlasglobal (atlasglb.com) flies daily from London Luton to Istanbul Ataturk, with one-way fares starting from £68.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD (12A, 119 mins) Romance/Drama

A RECENT re-release of John Schlesinger's 1967 version of Far From The Madding Crowd provided a timely reminder of the raw emotional power of Thomas Hardy's late 19th-century novel and Julie Christie's luminous portrayal of heroine, Bathsheba Everdene.

Danish director Thomas Vinterberg brings a delicate touch to this handsome new incarnation, which runs 50 minutes shorter than its predecessor and is undernourished as a consequence.

While Vinterberg's vision, filmed on location in pastoral Dorset, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, lacks emotional heft, it packs a mighty visual punch thanks to cinematographer Charlotte Bruus Christensen.

Rolling landscapes look invitingly wild and untamed, bathed largely in natural light, and the nascent beauty of leading lady carey Mulligan shines through the artfully composed muck and grime.

UNFRIENDED (15, 83 mins) Horror/Thriller/Romance

AN online prank spirals out of control in Unfriended, which takes the philosophical concept of a 'ghost in the machine' to the outlandish next level.

Directed by Levan Gabriadze and written by Nelson Greaves, this sleek horror pits a group of high school students against an online predator, one year after their classmate committed suicide.

The intriguing set-up promises more than the film can ultimately deliver.

Even though the ghoulish payoff is a let-down, director Gabriadze has undoubtedly stumbled upon an intriguing new way to unsettle audiences, who will think twice about logging onto social media as soon as the end credits roll.

TWO BY TWO: OOOPS... THE ARK HAS GONE (U, 87 mins) Animation/Family/Comedy/Action

THE biblical story of Noah, neatly encapsulated in six chapters of the book of Genesis, provides a weak catalyst for this derivative computer-animated adventure, which strives to emulate the Ice Age films but falls woefully short of that franchise's visual sophistication and belly laughs.

Co-directors Toby Genkel and Sean McCormack chart a pedestrian course through shallow dramatic waters, bringing together cuddly critters in a race against time to escape an apocalyptic downpour.

Thankfully Genkel and McCormack's film only lasts 87 minutes, but that still feels like a slog.

By Hannah Stephenson
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

ELBOW GREASE: A perfect lawn requires some effort

Preen your lawn to perfection

AS the weather warms up, the grass will be growing – so you need to get rid of lumps, bumps and bald patches to ensure you have a carpet of green velvet in the months ahead.

A good-looking, healthy lawn not only makes the whole garden look tidy and provides a wonderful framework for colourful beds and borders, but it also helps encourage wildlife into the garden.

You should already have begun work on drainage and oxygenation, but it's still not too late to scarify the lawn with a spring tine rake to remove thatch – dead grass that mats beneath growing grass – and moss. For larger lawns, it's worth renting a petrol driven lawn scarifier to do the same job.

If you have loads of moss, apply a moss killer before you scarify and wait a few days before raking it up, following instructions carefully.

Next, you need to improve badly draining soil by aerating the lawn, driving a garden fork into the ground all over the lawn when it is moist, making holes to a depth of 10-15cm (4-6in). I once bought a pair of lawn aerating shoes, but they were pretty cumbersome and kept falling off, so I went back to the fork.

Others use hollow-tine lawn aerators which remove plugs of soil from the ground, but they are hard work and aren't very good on stony soils or heavy, dry soils.

The holes you make allow air and water to get into the grass roots and should then be filled with a mixture of sharp sand and organic soil conditioner to stop the holes from closing up.

Feed the grass with lawn fertiliser available at most garden centres. This can be done by hand, applying approximately two grams per square metre, and water it in. All lawns need good drainage and oxygenation. Some lawn dressings incorporate a slow-release fertiliser but if this isn't the case, add a little amount of general lawn fertiliser (not containing weed or moss killer) before applying it. Make sure you brush it evenly over the area or it will become patchy when the fertiliser kicks in.

A few weeks later, if your lawn is still patchy, oversow it lightly with a quality lawn seed.

By summer, you should be mowing weekly, stepping up to twice a week when necessary, but don't mow the grass shorter than 2.5cm (1in) high and keep on top of weeds in the lawn. Annual weeds which emerge in any bare patches will be removed by mowing. Feeding should continue monthly through the summer, and in the autumn a high-potash fertiliser should be applied to keep grass luxuriant over the winter.

If it becomes necessary to water the lawn, avoid evaporation by watering in the early morning, late evening or using a timer at night. And even if watering does have to stop completely for a while and the lawn goes brown, it will recover once the rain comes.

They want to govern - **but YOU decide!**

Everyone is interested in what will happen in Kent, but the result will be decided by YOU, the voters.

Help to make up your mind by following the twists and turns of the election campaign every day on

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Kent on Sunday

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Ukip will make a real difference

THE red and blue teams are used to a two-horse race with the yellow upstarts muddying the water on occasions (KoS, last week).

In 2010 the reds ran out of money. The blues promised they would give us a referendum on the EU then blamed the yellows for their inability to deliver.

Fast foreword to 2015 and the reds can only win if they promise the SNP another break-up-the-UK referendum, but don't want the rest of us to have an EU one; the blues can only win if they can con us into thinking Germany and 26 other countries are willing to rewrite the EU constitution to suit Great Britain and graft wings to pink pigs.

So the cosy Westminster clan have come up with a cunning plan; blame Ukip.

I truly believe we can still run UK Ltd ourselves even if the reds, blues and yellows don't have the talent to do it. If you mix red and blue paint together you get purple.

David Steed,
Manston

Fight on to save our libraries

KENT on Sunday has kept people across Kent well informed, via its Feedback page, about the 'save our public libraries' petition.

Readers may like to know that, by the time it was delivered to County Hall in Maidstone, more than 4,000 people had signed.

The petition opposed cuts and closures to libraries and called on Kent County Council to continue running Kent's 99 much-loved libraries as an integrated public service, democratically accountable through councillors, and with professional library staff.

The petition was a response to KCC's proposal to hand the library service over to a trust. If enacted this would be a huge change.

The library service has been paid for by many generations and a trust would introduce new uncertainty and risk to the future of Kent's libraries.

Many people thought that KCC's consultation document about this change did not identify these risks, nor did it set out the hidden costs of a trust that would all come out of the libraries budget.

The 4,000 signatures is a strong call for a full council debate about the way forward. This debate should allow public input; and full information about the risks and costs associated with experimental options like trusts must be made available before any final decision is made. The decision to go ahead with this should not be a formality as the petition demonstrates.

KoS readers can stay informed about KCC's response to the petition as well as share information about any of Kent's libraries via the recently set up Love Kent Libraries Facebook page.

Richard Stainton,
Whitstable

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Why did you forget the Catholic church?

WHAT a strange and incomplete article (KoS, last week) about loss of faith in the UK.

The reporter begins by asking the Anglican Bishop of Rochester.

For it is true that many Church of England churches have dwindling congregations, many churches are closing and parishes are amalgamating.

The same is largely true of Baptist, Methodist and URC churches, although they do not rate a mention.

Islam is then covered, along with Sikhism, Judaism and even Humanism, which is not even rated as a religion for the purposes of the survey.

Yet he deliberately skews the findings by omitting the largest church membership in the UK, which is the Roman Catholic church. Perhaps he hasn't heard of it? The churches are full to bursting every Sunday and it is often difficult to find a seat. In Maidstone for example, there are eight masses every Sunday, and they are all full. That is several thousand Catholics every Sunday just for one town in Kent, all practising their religious beliefs.

In Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells, and Tonbridge the same story, and indeed throughout all the RC churches in the UK. And every Easter, thousands more are admitted to the RC church, and 3.5 million Catholics in the UK overall. 1.2 billion Catholics worldwide.

The church in this country does not consist of just the dying Church of England, and the article gives a very biased view by deliberately omitting the largest church organisation in the UK.

A bit more balance please if you are going to write articles on religious faith... the Catholic church is the largest repository of faith in the country.

Patrick Storrar
via email

Homophobia is still real danger

SO, very tellingly, John Humphrey avoids replying to my letter last week, opting to complain only about Chris Hudson-Gool's equally valid points; and then rehashing the 'gay cure' nonsense etc.

He reveals his early teens issues with sexuality; but these are, then and now, only what happens naturally during puberty, and are in no way "unhealthy", nor "straying" into being gay. It's quite common to have feelings both ways early on, but these settle from mid to late teens into most people being straight and few becoming gay or bisexual.

The Bible says quite little on sex overall. Jesus himself is not recorded as speaking on the issue and again said little on sex overall; even in the newly rediscovered 'other' Gospels.

He then implies he's had contact with other gay people, but confuses homophobia for valid criticism of his stance; and then tries again to say the former should not really exist anymore!

Tell that to those in Russia, Uganda, Nigeria etc who are under threat of attacks, jail, or death on a daily basis.

The fact remains though that 'true freedom' lies not in bogus gay cures or repressing feelings, Mr Humphrey, but in accepting them, and allowing and enabling others to do the same.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

Back local boy in the big race

WORK took me away from South Thanet after the last election but I still have huge affection for the area and many friends who live there.

The Labour Government drove the area forward, halved unemployment, brought in the HS1 fast train service, delivered the East Kent Access road scheme, transformed the NHS in east Kent and provided children's centres and new school buildings so young people would get the start in life they deserved.

Watching that progress come to a grinding halt under the Tory led coalition has been heartbreaking so I can understand local people wanting a fresh start. But the mean-spirited, little England policies of Ukip are not the answer.

Nor does the new Tory candidate provide a meaningful alternative. He only offers Ukip policies in a different colour. He was a leading member of Ukip for many years, standing for election for them on five occasions, and has no connections with South Thanet.

I lived in the area for many years before becoming MP, and Laura Sandys, to her credit, also spent four years getting to know the area before running. I disagreed with her on many things, but on this point I must give her her due.

Will Scobie, for Labour, is of course as local as they come.

Dr Stephen Ladyman,
South Thanet MP, 1997-2010

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

The way KoS will create our unique and compelling content is to follow these 10 principles:

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

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by **Brian Summers, Faversham**

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GROWTH: Kent's Federation of Small Business wants whoever wins the election to simplify business systems

Growth is big issue at election for business

by Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

WITH Tuesday's announcement from the Office for National Statistics that growth across the country had slowed to just 0.3 per cent in the first quarter of the year, businesses across Kent are hoping that whichever party forms the government after the General Election, will create an environment fit for growth.

The slowdown, says the Labour Party, was as a result of the Conservative Party failing to invest for people. The Tories hit back, with Chancellor George Osborne, who was in Ramsgate earlier in the week to discuss the coastal communities regeneration fund, saying that growth 'couldn't be taken for granted and the future of the economy would depend on the ballot paper come May 7'.

Jo James, the chief executive at the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, told KoS that whoever won, stability for the county's businesses would be the key factor following the election.

She said: "It is essential that whatever party or parties are in power for the next term the priority needs to be providing an environment that is conducive to business growth and enterprise.

"Things need to quickly settle down and to create a stable environment that will enable businesses to plan and invest for the long term."

The CEO also says that the chamber has put together what it calls a 'business plan for Britain'; a set of things she believes were necessary to deliver growth.

She said: "Britain's next government should be assessed against stretching economic aspirations so that businesses and voters can judge our political class by what they help us to achieve.

"By maintaining a relentless focus on policies that deliver prosperity, the next government can help to achieve these aspirations."

Her wish list of items to be tackled by the new government

Swedish bank arrives in Ashford

ASHFORD town centre got a business boost, after Handelsbanken announced it would open a new branch in International House.

The Swedish banking group said it had been attracted to Ashford as the location for its new office due to the high speed rail network and regeneration efforts in the town's new commercial quarter.

Safety first for Swale Heating

SITTINGBOURNE-based business, Swale Heating was this week named Regional Social Housing Contractor of the Year at the annual Association of Gas Safety Managers (AGSM) awards

Judges said the company had made huge efforts to maintain safety. The company was nominated by one of the UK's biggest social housing providers Affinity Sutton.

Big opportunity for developers

SAVILLS has announced it will be auctioning a strategic development site which forms part of Temple Waterfront in Rochester.

The business will be selling the land - which has outline planning permission for a mixed use development - on behalf of cement maker Lafarge. It's expected to sell for around £5 million.

The auction is on May 14 at Nottingham Racecourse.

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Continued from front

includes topics as diverse as training and education, infrastructure and competitiveness across different international markets.

The backbone of the UK economy, small business, is also calling on whichever party gets into power to deliver on a shopping list of policies which it believes will help support the sector in the future.

The Federation of Small Businesses - a national campaign group - says that what is needed for growth is straight forward support for small employers.

Its Kent business development officer, Alison Parmar, told KoS that after the election, she hopes government would continue the work it has started on business rate reform.

She said: "One thing we're fighting for is business rates to be thoroughly overhauled. It's an archaic system currently, and one which has stunted business growth in the past. The chancellor has previously committed to reviewing it and reforming it, and we want to see that carried out whoever gets into government.

"Across Kent broadband connectivity is still a big issue for many small businesses. We want to see more support for those businesses, as good broadband connections open up a whole new range of possibilities for companies like exporting abroad and e-commerce."

The key thing, though, according to Mrs Parmar, is that small businesses get a clearer steer on what's required from government - something critical in Kent, with around 13,000 small businesses setting up in the county last year.

> **"Clarity in areas which have always been difficult for small business will be crucial if governments wants to help engineer growth going forward...."**
>
> **Alison Parmar,**
> Federation of Small Businesses

She said: "In Kent we are looking for things to be simplified. The FSB wants small business to sit at the heart of government, as it adds so much to the economy. Its contribution is huge, both in terms of jobs created as well as money in the economy generated. We want government to sit up and take note of all that small businesses do, and to give it a proper place at the table."

One thing which Mrs Parmar says should help instantly is for certain areas of red-tape to be slimmed down.

She said: "Clarity in areas which have always been troublesome for small business will be crucial if governments wants to help engineer growth going forward.

"Things like tax regulations, which can be incredibly complex, need to be streamlined so that businesses which are only employing a handful of staff are able to deal with them.

"If government can make small business a part of what it does, and simplify certain things, then the county should be set for growth going forward."

Campaign hopes to help rural producers

by Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

THE county's rural businesses will get a boost as online campaign Make One Change aims to encourage people to shop locally.

The campaign launched at the beginning of May, and is looking to support small rural food and drinks businesses across the county, by creating a directory of local producers for the public.

A number of Kent's producers and small farms shops are set to benefit from the scheme, which is asking consumers to make one change to their usual shopping habits – either by buying locally, supporting a rural producer, or boycotting chain supermarkets.

The scheme is the brainchild of rural food and drink website, BigBarn, which says it hopes the small change can make a big difference.

"With almost 60 per cent of our retail spend made in the supermarkets, it is time to make a change to the way we shop and ensure that small, rural businesses can survive," explains Anthony Davison, founder of BigBarn.

"At BigBarn we are always striving to find new ways to entice people away from the supermarkets and into small, independent stores. The aim of Make One Change is to prove that small changes make a big difference and that shopping locally doesn't have to be a challenge."

EASY: The campaign looks to show how simple it is to support local producers

"Shopping locally is not only a more appealing and pleasant experience, but it can also save money. What we've always found in the past is that once a person makes a decision to change the way they shop, it normally leads onto other small changes. We're hoping this campaign will be the start of a whole new way of thinking for people and prove that local food is best."

Transport sector brings cheer helping Kent's economy take off

by Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

AVIATION is leading the way in helping Kent's economy grow according to an aviation expert based at Lydd Airport.

Jonathan Gordon, the founder and managing director of Atlantic Bridge Aviation Limited, says the growth he's seen in the aviation industry is "a sure sign that the economic recovery is in full swing across the UK and Europe."

He told KoS that the sector, more than most, had helped boost economic activity in the county.

He said: "The long-term resilience of air travel to economic recessions and global events like wars and terrorist activity is well-known. It's significant to note after each event the aviation market has rebounded strongly.

"We are in that recovery phase now, with all the recent forecasts by aircraft manufacturers and others indicating healthy traffic growth in air travel in the UK, Europe and worldwide."

TRANSPORT: The sector has seen strong growth in both aviation and cross-Channel travel

That assessment is borne out by performance at Lydd Airport, which recently announced rising passenger numbers, an increase in aircraft traffic, job creation and investment.

Chief executive at Lydd Charles Buchanan said: "There is a growing demand at Lydd driven by business and general aviation. In 2014, we handled 10 per cent more passengers and 15 per cent more aircraft movements than the previous year, and this year the trends are continuing."

It's not just aviation which has boosted Kent's economy though; cross-Channel travel from the Port of Dover has seen significant growth too.

The port announced earlier this week that it had delivered a record year with more than 2.4 million freight vehicles handling goods worth an estimated £100 billion.

Panini team up to score in FA deal

TUNBRIDGE Wells-based sticker company Panini has signed a new four-year deal with the Football Association.

Peter Warsop, group licensing director, said: "The FA agreement completes an important piece of the jigsaw as well as the official tournament rights, for such things as the Euro 2016, England joins other Federations to ensure 100 per cent authenticity."

Kent women make top award shortlist

THREE Kent women have been shortlisted in the Real Business First Women Awards this year.

Sian Holt, of Lyminge-based Fudge Kitchen, Emily Kettle, MD of Ashford's Facts International, and Lisa Scott, of Gourmet Gadgetry, all made it through.

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DONNA 36yrs un-modest but very attractive, nice eyes, good figure, GSOH, OHAC, great job, sick of never meeting Mr Right, looking for someone special. Genuine male please. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415187**

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874**

BLONDE female, 5ft 1ins, size 12, likes meals out, drinks, nights in, walks, seeks male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 409025**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel No: 0906 500 1912 Box 413399**

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349**

ADVENTUROUS sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. **Tel No: 0906 500 1913 Box 415301**

ATTRACTIVE lady early 50's, petite, Scandinavian blonde professional, WLTM professional, caring gent, 50-60's for attention and future together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416569**

ANNE, mid 40's, cheerful busty curvy affectionate real woman! Seeks gent, any age or looks for nights at mine. **Tel No: 0906 500 1914 Box 410291**

TARA, confident lady, long legs, long hair, seeks a saucy man of any age for daytime, no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 4693 Box 414701**

JAN 63, young at heart, petite, 5ft 2ins, brown hair, blue eyes, GSOH, likes cooking, countryside, travel, days out, seeks easy going male, 60-70. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416349**

DISCREET lady, 42yrs wants to make you happy, come to me and let me do that for you. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 1915 Box 409901**

ALISON 39, petite with long brown hair, hazel eyes, very loving, seeking similar male for an uncomplicated relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416517**

ALISON 30, pretty, slim with long brown hair, fit and active seeks fit older male for energetic relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416497**

DEBORAH 41, intelligent brunette, lovely brown eyes, discreet, many interests, seeks similar male to share fun and good conversation. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416515**

ATTRACTIVE black, athletic lady, varied interests, seeks similar white, old fashioned, genuine male for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416215**

MAY sexy black African female, 38, hardworking, seeks generous friendly male for mutual rewarding friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416211**

SUE young at heart, good looking, enjoy life, socialising, beach walks, gardening, theatre, seeking male, 55-65 to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416171**

BLONDE female, 47, looking for fun, sensual, experienced, understanding, seeking similar. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415675**

JACKIE 32, attractive professional, very smart and feminine, long brown hair, seeks smart, confident, older male who knows how to treat a lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416297**

BECKY 23, classy blonde, long blonde hair, blue eyes seeks loving older guy to spoil and pamper her. Discretion assured/guaranteed. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416233**

LINDA 26, cheeky, curvy brunette, a little shy at first, likes to look after herself, seeks dark haired male for discreet naughty but fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416195**

TERESA 39, petite, cuddly and bubbly seeks kind older male to travel, have fun, and take care of, pamper and flirt with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416081**

LUCY stunning tall brunette, looking for exciting times, seeks like-minded, adventurous male who is willing to try anything once or maybe even twice! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416079**

PETITE blonde, blue eyes, very feminine and sensual seeks younger male for friendship and discreet fun. Can accommodate. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416077**

SARAH 29yr old pretty slim single mum of one, interesting, lively, good fun, enjoys nights in/out, music, seeking similar easy going, genuine, honest man/dad to get to know. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415841**

ANGIE attractive nurse 39yrs, new to area/advertising, likes dog walking, being sociable, meals in/out, WLTM honest, fun male for possible ltr. looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415827**

LISA attractive petite Filipino female, very lonely, wanting to find love, companionship and to be happy, looking for friendship and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415549**

SUE 65, 5ft 8ins, blonde hair, fashionable, smoker, GSOH, enjoys meals out, travel, animals, WLTM kind, shyish man for friendship, maybe more. Thanet area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415735**

INTELLIGENT funny guy without a huge ego required for damaged heart. Casey 39, size 10, curves in all the right paces, pretty, kind, loving, genuine, romantic and available. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415509**

BLACK lady 43, sincere, down to earth, fun loving, likes theatre, cinema, meals out, walks, seeking white gent with GSOH, sincere and down to earth. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415477**

JENNY voluptuous blonde tanned well-presented female, enjoys being and giving pampering, cooking, cosy nights, looking for some broadminded excitement. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415399**

JOYCE 39, attractive GSOH, loves nights out, honest, loyal, fun to be with, looking for mature male for adult companionship, meals out and hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415561**

NICOLETTE 32 petite professional attractive black female looking for similar hardworking white male who like me loves life and is serious about finding a LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415545**

PAT blonde blue eyed curvy, cuddly female, attractive, likes swimming, gardening, holidays, my job/home, looking for happiness with quiet content grounded male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415533**

MANDY 35, petite attractive slim female with very GSOH, likes to keep fit, meals in/out, WLTM genuine child friendly guy/dad for fun times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415513**

JACKIE very pretty leggy well-mannered/educated 28yr old female, loves nights in/out, sports, WLTM sincere male up to 35yrs for friendship, hopefully ltr. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415377**

ALISON 27yr old very bored broadminded female with plenty of free time on her hands looking for some adult fun times. Call me, I won't disappoint. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415177**

DEE lonely divorced female, slim, bubbly, attractive redhead, loves cuddles, looking for a man who can restore my faith in love and make me laugh. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414961**

JACKIE extremely sensual lady but for your eyes-only! likes horses, keeping fit, gardening looking for genuine love interest and companionship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414721**

TERI separated single lady, blonde, blue eyes, slim, WLTM compatible male for genuine friendship, meals out, weekends away, nights out and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414361**

DEBBIE brown eyed attractive social female, romantic, good listener, loves children, looking for similar nice male/dad to get to know, hopefully leading to more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414383**

ELAINE 30, fit, sexy, curvy black lady, very feminine, loves wining, dining, nights in, seeks solvent white 40's male who is passionate, loving and caring. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414711**

Men Seeking

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GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

KIND, tall, medium build, smart, easy going widower, 71 WLM Lady 60s early 70s, for easy going friendship OHAC. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4641218**

MALE, attractive, kind, loyal, gentle, no ties, looking for kind, gentle, small lady for friendship and LTR. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4711124**

DOVER male 54 seeks female for friendship, conversation and maybe more. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4682630**

STU 52, looking for a sincere women to share the long winter nights with. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4609904**

KEEN cyclist 58, non competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337**

FEMALE pillion passenger sought for motorcycle rides / adventures and anything else good/bad. Any age/status, 59yr old male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416827**

LOCAL Sevenoaks man, seeks local lady for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417127**

MALE 46, wishes to meet female of similar age for fun, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415923**

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388372**

PETE 49, slim, 5ft 7in s, smoker, creative, likes art, live bands, outdoors, seeks similar female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416421**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

MALE 70's, fit, looking for lady to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416663**

BARRY divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

JAMES 36, well travelled, likes photography, cinema, seeks fun girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 337663**

JAMES 39, blond hair, blue eyes, seeking female for fun times, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390892**

GRAHAM tall, semi retired, Piscean, likes sailing, seeks female, any nationality. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415463**

MALE blond hair, blue eyes, seeking female with GSOH, 45-60. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416445**

EASY going male, 48, divorced, kids grown up time to meet someone new. Enjoy most things and will give anything ago. **Text only Mailbox no: 4646694**

TALL male likes meals out, seeking female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416899**

JACK 47, tall, good-looking, average build, GSOH, seeks broadminded female for discreet no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416867**

ASHFORD male, 66, GSOH, easy going, smoker, down to earth, adventurous, seeks like-minded female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416845**

FEMALE pillion passenger sought for motorcycle rides / adventures and anything else good/bad. Any age/status, 59yr old male. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416827**

YOUNG 64yr old male, slim, GSOH, adventurous, outgoing, likes most things, seeks easygoing, laidback, open-minded lady for friendship and good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 399539**

KEEN cyclist 58, non competitive, seeks similar female for sea wall, countryside ride, walking etc for fun, laughs and whatever. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 413337**

CHIPS on the pier, walks on the beach/countryside, VGSOH, 58yrs old, fit male, seeks female for laughs and love and whatever. NE Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411725**

JOHN 40, likes nights out, pubs, clubs, walks, countryside, GSOH, N/S, dad of one, seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390119**

FEMININE sensual female, slim-medium build wanted by slim, kind male for daytime meets, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414809**

JON seeking female for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416771**

MALE 46, wishes to meet female of similar age for fun, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415923**

JACK 47, tall, good looking, average build, GSHOH, seeks slim, broad minded female, any age for discreet no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416567**

KIND affectionate male, seeks likeminded lady. Tonbridge/Sevenoaks. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383518**

QUIET easy going gent, likes nights in/out, seeks kind, caring white female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416055**

NICE guy seeks attractive lady for fun time, maybe more. Sevenoaks. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 385370**

WELL built 6ft tall ex soldier would like to be given my orders by a special lady and to have fun times with. **Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4420728**

MALE 70's, fit, looking for lady to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416663**

JACK 47, tall, good looking, average build, GSHOH, seeks slim, broad minded female, any age for discreet no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416567**

MALE blond hair, blue eyes, seeking female with GSOH, 45-60. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416445**

JACK 47, tall, good looking, average build, GSOH, seeks slim, broadminded, submissive female, any age for discreet no strings fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416435**

PETE 49, slim, 5ft 7in s, smoker, creative, likes art, live bands, outdoors, seeks similar female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416421**

SIMON 49, actor, likes music, films, reading, writing, loop holes, Thailand, Singapore, seeking pretty female, 35 plus for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416345**

ELDERLY Redhill male, seeks slim lady to reignite ones thoughts of female company. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416221**

ACTIVE honest, reliable, loyal, N/S male, 70, varied interests, seeks slim, positive, 60's lady for friendship and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415931**

MATURE businessman, seeking slim, independent young female for mutual pleasure. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 416023**

ASIAN male, 68, US educated, seeks black/European female of similar age, discreet, East London. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415997**

BRITISH white professional male, seeking intelligent, independent Asian/black female, 30-42 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415961**

WHITE Spanish male, 42, work full time, seeks African lady, 20-45 for relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415941**

JOHN 67, gentle, easy going, good natured, seeks affectionate, loving black female, any age for friendship and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415913**

MALE 46, wishes to meet female of similar age for fun, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415923**

74YR old retired, widowed male, fit, young looking, seeking younger female for fun and friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415855**

LONELY 75yr old male, OHAC, tall, medium build, genuine, loving, kind, seeking lovely kind lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415791**

MIKE Canterbury mature male, seeks single mum/lady, 28-42, slim-medium build for loving, caring relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415275**

BUILDER 45, tall, good-looking, kind, considerate, easy going seeks female. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 415315**

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driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

XY: Xy

Viva the Vauxhall Viva!

Having lain dormant for 35 years and been replaced by the likes of the Astra, Nova, Corsa and latterly Adam, Vauxhall's entry model name is resurrected with the hopes of finding a new five-door city car fan club...

AFTER decades of standardized names for models produced by Vauxhall and German sister brand, Opel, the arrival of a new city car sees them driving apart.

To the Continent it will be known as the Karl; to Brits it will be the Viva – rather fitting for a name rising from the dead.

Viva was axed in 1979 after three generations – the HA, HB and HC – had been a familiar sight on British roads from 1963 as a rival to cars like the Morris Minor and Ford Anglia, latterly being augmented by the Vauxhall Chevette until both models were eventually replaced by the Astra.

But the Astra has got bigger over the years and, first the Corsa supermini – known here initially as the Nova – and then the glitzy Adam three-door mini car were slotted in below it.

Now Vauxhall/Opel clearly see a need for a price-sensitive five-door city car – it will sell for less than £8,000 – to replace the rather more upright Agila supermini/MPV.w

The new Viva is a stylish thing, but the ace up its sleeve is the three-cylinder 1.0-litre turbocharged engine that made its debut in the latest Corsa and then revitalized the Adam; the inherent roughness of the three-cylinder has been engineered out to leave a light yet powerful unit that is frugal with low emissions yet capable of delivering a punch when required.

For this alone, let alone the newcomer's style, the Viva immediately looks a threat to the established stars of the city car sector: the VW Up and its cloned sisters, the Skoda Citigo and SEAT Mii, and the sophisticated Hyundai i10.

The Viva's cabin should also be a big plus in this outbreak of city car wars; the Vauxhall is slightly longer than its rivals, suggesting that legroom will be far better.

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Fuel consumption MPG (l/100km) for Hyundai range: Urban 25.2 (11.2) - 70.6 (4.0), Extra Urban 38.7 (7.3) - 83.1 (3.4), Combined 32.1 (8.8) - 76.3 (3.7), CO2 Emissions 231 - 96 g/km.
Fuel consumption: figures shown are based on official EU test figures. These are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results. Terms and conditions apply. Vehicles shown for illustration purposes only. Finance subject to status. Over 18's only. Written quotattions available on request. A guarantee may be required. *Part exchange vehicles must have a minimum of 6 months MOT and be free from mechanical faults.

Celestial Celerio is nicely down to earth

Suzuki shows two cars can go into one by replacing its Alto and Splash models with the clever Celerio, writes Steve Loader...

Suzuki Celerio SZ3

Price:	from £7,999
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★★
How green?:	★★★★★
Best rival:	Skoda Citigo

WHERE once they might have had four stock models, car companies have raced to extend their ranges as new niches have opened up – allegedly.

Not so, Suzuki. Like a sniper, the Japanese marque has created a decent market share by picking its targets.

So, where most manufacturers' ranges extend to double figures, Suzuki has just five models, with the new Celerio five-door hatchback (from £7,999) recently replacing not one, but two models, the Alto city car and Splash supermini MPV.

At a stroke, Suzuki has re-created the compactness of the former while delivering much of the latter's space-efficiency.

It's a clever little car that could easily emulate the success of Suzuki's brilliant Swift – pound for pound, possibly the best supermini you can buy.

Indeed, the worse thing about the Celerio is the silly name; it means 'celestial river' but sounds more down to earth – like a salad vegetable – but then, this is a down to earth car.

It won't win any beauty contests,

but it's competitively priced and well-equipped – six airbags, air con, digital radio, Bluetooth and alloys are all standard.

It also costs peanuts to run, with up to 78.4mpg (combined cycle) available and all versions exempt from road tax, and will take four tall adults with ease plus squeeze a teenager into the back for good measure.

And it will be galling to rivals that, in a city car sector where often pathetic boot space has become a turn-off for some buyers, the Celerio trounces all comers by offering 254 litres – the Ford Fiesta from the class

above hardly puts the Suzuki in the shade with its 290. Fold the 60/40 split rear seats and you also get a near flat load space of 726 litres.

The cabin is neither luxurious nor cheap and could do with some of the razzamatazz of the Peugeot 108, for instance, but it does look durable and everything is well organised.

And the precise five-speed gearshift falls nicely to hand.

Which is good, as the Celerio belies its slightly awkward lines by being decent to drive. You can never have your cake and eat it so the car's passenger-friendly height does make it heel into the bends a little, and a 1.0-litre three-cylinder engine rarely excites, especially one of just 67bhp and offering 0-62mph in 14 seconds – no spinnaker supplied I'm afraid.

But the Celerio's weight-saving design makes it feel nimble and well cut out for town centre cut and thrust, even if it isn't that refined when cruising the motorway.

We drove the entry level engine, but the most frugal and lowest emission 'Dualjet' unit is offered for a £500 premium, and there is a Celerio auto model (£9,799).

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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km). Vauxhall New Corsa range: Urban: 36.2 (7.8) - 76.3 (3.7), Extra-urban: 57.6 (4.9) - 94.2 (3.0), Combined: 47.1 (6.0) - 88.3 (3.2). CO_2 emissions: 140-85g/km.#

Personal contract hire offer on New Corsa Limited Edition 1.2 3dr in Flame Red and New Corsa Excite 1.2 5dr in Flame Red on orders received between 8 April and 1 July 2015, subject to availability and status. Age 18+ only. Figures for New Corsa Limited Edition based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £537, then 23 monthly rentals of £179. Excess annual miles over contracted mileage of 16000 over 24 months charged at 5.53ppm. Figures for New Corsa Excite based on a non-maintenance contract hire package with advance rental of £588, then 23 monthly rentals of £196. Excess annual miles over contracted mileage of 16,000 over 24 months charged at 5.53ppm. Excess charges also apply if you breach manufacturer servicing or maintenance guidelines or if the car exceeds BVRLA Fair Wear & Tear guidelines for its age/mileage when it is returned to Vauxhall Leasing. Package includes Road Fund Licence and Vauxhall Assistance. Guarantee/indemnity may be required. Prices and details are subject to change without notice. For full specification and Ts&Cs contact your local Retailer. **You will not own the car.** ALD Automotive Ltd., trading as Vauxhall Leasing, BS16 3JA. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. ^Applicants must hold a full, valid driving licence and be 18+ to qualify for a test drive. #MPG figures are official test data and may not reflect real driving results. Correct at time of going to press.

Advertiser's Announcement

Motorline Renault's transformation in Maidstone

Motorline Maidstone has transformed its Renault dealership on Bircholt Road into a state-of-the-art showroom and service centre in line with the French car manufacturer's new corporate global identity.

One of the first UK showrooms to incorporate Renault's new 'Passion for Life' branding, the revamped dealership features the highest standards in showroom design across the 32,000 sq ft facility. Its state-of-the-art workshop includes a series of bespoke built-in cabinets and extensive glass panels that allow customers to view work taking place – helping to create a seamless, integrated customer experience.

The high-tech service centre is equipped with top-level diagnostic equipment and staffed by qualified Renault technicians. From here, Motorline Maidstone offers routine servicing, MOTs and repairs, and everything required by the Renault warranty, including genuine Renault parts.

The facility provides a perfect showcase for Motorline Maidstone's full range of new Renault models and a wide variety of used approved vehicles. As well as popular Renault cars such as the stylish Clio, spacious Captur and Top Gear's City Car of the Year, the New Twingo, the showroom also features the four-strong range of great value Dacia cars.

In addition, the site offers the Renault Pro+ centre for business customers, a specialist team for fleet vehicles and both Class 4 and Class 7 MOT services. To enhance the whole customer experience – before, during and after the purchase – Motorline Maidstone also provides a comprehensive aftersales service and a variety of courtesy vehicles.

Mark Batt, General Manager at Motorline Maidstone, said: "Motorline Renault has been a big part of the Maidstone community for the past four years. We're really proud of these stunning new facilities, and will continue to offer some of the best deals in the region, as well as outstanding customer service.

"We will be hosting a launch event later in the year, which will be a fantastic opportunity for old and new customers to experience the improved home of Renault in Maidstone."

Founded in 1972, with over 900 employees, Motorline Group has become one of the UK's largest motoring groups, with dealerships located across Kent, West Sussex, Surrey, Bristol and South Wales.

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commercial vehicles

A buyer's guide

Van sales oil wheels of the UK's recovery

BY STEVE LOADER

VAN sales this year are on course for an all-time high, with 97,775 new vehicles registered already from January to March.

That's a 22.3 per cent leap over the same period in 2014 says industry voice the Society of Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) and proves that customers have returned to the market in force as business confidence soars after the recessionary years.

It is good news overall for the UK too; vans oil the wheels of business, construction and manufacturing, so new sales act as a barometer for the economic weather.

However, the strength of the upturn also shows how low the country plunged during recession, with van operators retaining and punishing vehicles by clocking more miles than normal.

As a result, the used van market is full of tired stock, accelerating the bounce back in the new vehicle market, which gained yet another boost from the 15-plate change in March.

Mike Hawes, the SMMT's chief executive, said demand for the latest vans and trucks is now back to pre-recession levels – outpacing the rest of Europe – and added that increasing demand and manufacture here was also adding to the UK recovery with home and export demand:

"This growth will help return the sector to a stable natural level following major restructuring of the industry in recent years."

ANOTHER PANEL VAN 'NEWBIE': Renault has just launched an all-new Trafic

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Fuel consumption figures for the Fiat Professional range mpg (l/100km): Urban from 25.9 (10.9) - 64.2 (4.4); Extra Urban from 40.3 (7.0) - 97.4 (2.9); Combined from 33.6 (8.4) - 80.7 (3.5). CO2 emissions 90 - 222g/km. Fuel consumption and CO2 figures based on standard EU tests for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Business users only. Whilst stocks last. Not available in conjunction with any other offer. Terms & Conditions apply. Prices correct at time of printing. Offer may be varied and withdrawn at any time. Licenced credit brokers. Vehicle shown for illustration purposes only. Offer based on 48 month lease with no final payment. All prices are plus VAT and Road Fund Licence.

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Boxing clever

VANS are utility vehicles – boxes to be stuffed with cargo – yet operators have seen economy, efficiency and flexibility soar, while drivers enjoy better performance, refinement and safety.

The latter trends came largely from car-derived designs; lightly modified superminis or family hatchbacks where rear windows were blanked out and back seats removed to make a load space, but with the driver gaining the benefits of the equivalent car owner, including air con and a decent sound system

The philosophy migrated to larger vans, sometimes now derived from better handling platforms of popular cars even if the van body is bespoke.

Load capacities grew, varying from as little as three cubic metres for a car-derived hatchback courier van or company runabout, right up to a 17 cubic-metre delivery van.

Access improved too. Many larger vans have low floors in the driving compartment for easy access and most vehicles above supermini class now come with a sliding door as standard to aid loading - many buyers take the option of a second 'slider'.

And there is now usually a choice of side-opening twin rear doors or high lift tailgate, while cab doors generally have a reduced opening angle; it's easier then for a busy driver to grab and close the door, or avoid it swinging wide and hitting something... or someone.

Another recent phenomenon is the 'Dualiner' that can seat five and still carry a decent cargo; ideal for companies needing to send a crew on the road plus all their gear, or the owner operator or tradesman who needs to carry his kit on weekdays and the family at weekends.

But it's not just vans that are changing but the way they are sold; with advantageous lease deals and buying plans, a new van offers the latest comfort levels, lowest operating costs from the latest powertrains, and will make you and new customers feel good about the business.

'DUALINER' OPTION INCLUDED: the Mercedes-Benz Citan

AWARD WINNER: the versatile Fiat Doblò Cargo

SMALL YET FLEXIBLE: Peugeot's Bipper

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Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO_2 emissions (g/km) for the 108 range are: Urban 52.3 – 62.8 (5.4 – 4.5), Extra Urban 74.3 – 83.1 (3.8 – 3.4), Combined 65.7 – 74.3 (4.3 – 3.8) and CO_2 99 – 88 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. Terms and conditions apply, participating dealers only or visit www.peugeot.co.uk. To finance your lease we may introduce you to a limited number of lenders. #Passport Personal Lease: A guarantee may be required. Over 18s only. Peugeot Citroen Retail UK is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender. Finance provided by and written quotations available from PSA Finance UK Ltd t/a Peugeot Financial Services, Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill, RH1 1QA. All offers available on qualifying vehicles ordered and registered between 01/03/15 and 30/06/15 or until such time as they may be withdrawn by Peugeot at its complete discretion. 108 Active 3dr 1.0 68, customer initial rental £2,079, optional final rental £4,995. 35 monthly rentals payable. 6,000 miles per annum. Excess mileage charges may apply. If you choose to pay the optional final rental, you can pay an annual rental equivalent to one of your monthly rentals but will not own the car. Ownership is possible with Passport – ask us for details. Calls may be recorded for training purposes. Information correct at time of going to press.

Top tips on van buying

● SIZE it up – gauging space and weight requirements is crucial for small or start-up businesses, so make sure you opt for a van that can grow with your needs. Conversely, don't rush into a bigger van – it might cripple your fledgling business with higher leasing and operating costs.

● Access – do you need one or two side sliding doors, and will you have to unload in cramped spaces that might not cope with a tailgate? Might twin rear doors be better?

● Powertrain – you'll probably want a diesel, though electric might be good for your firm's image as well as operating costs if you cover few miles. Opt for an automatic gearbox too, if you often sit in traffic or do lots of stop-start work. Of course, if you cram your van and use all of its weight capacity, consider a bigger engine.

● Do your research – don't just go for a brand because you like the cars it makes; the van business is a different ball game. It's also worth checking models that win awards; van media tend to be hard-nosed about operating costs, convenience and other aspects – awards are well earned

● Go for a test drive – as it's a working vehicle, you or a staff member will spend lots of time in it, so it must work well for the driver and be easy to handle and park.

● Does it look good? – a crazy question maybe, but appearances can be important to your company image or, the bottom line, if it will be parked outside your house or on the drive – what will the neighbours say, or crucially, 'er indoors?

● New or used? – a new van is better for your business image, and there is the promise of greater reliability and no need for an MOT for three years, but it costs more to acquire. A good compromise is to buy a smart used van with warranty from a main dealer though, as we said earlier in this supplement, quality used vans are in short supply post-recession.

PUT IT TO THE TEST: above, can this Peugeot Boxer panel van measure up to your needs?

CHECK THE COSTS: left, does the little Citroën Nemo fit the bill – literally?

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CRÉATIVE TECHNOLOGIE

CITROËN

‡Offers apply to qualifying new Citroën models ordered & delivered 01/01-30/06/15 for business users only, excluding National Fleet customers as defined by Citroën & exclude VAT. Contract Hire rentals shown apply to Citroën Berlingo HDi 75 manual L1 625 Enterprise & an advance rental of £834 will be required followed by 24 monthly rentals on a 2 year agreement of 10,000 miles per annum. Contract Hire rental includes delivery to dealership, Citroën Roadside Assistance, Vehicle Excise Duty & Government First Registration Fee. Metallic paint optional at no extra cost. Excess mileage charges may apply if the agreed annual mileage is exceeded. Contract Hire rental rates have been calculated with the appropriate manufacturer's support applied to the OTR price. All rentals are subject to VAT at 20%. Citroën Contract Motoring reserve the right to amend any of the rentals quoted without notice. Finance subject to status. Guarantees may be required. Over 18s only. Written quotations available on request from Banque PSA Finance UK Branch trading as Citroën Contract Motoring, Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill, RH1 1QA. Jarretts Motors Ltd is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender. To finance your purchase/lease we may introduce you to a limited number of lenders. Finance offers apply to UK only. Offers & specification correct at time of going to press from participating Dealers. Terms & conditions apply. Please ask us for details. Subject to stock availability.

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ELECTRIC APPEAL: Renault's Kangoo Van is also available with battery power

Electric arrives but diesel rules roost

HAVING seen off petrol power, diesel is king in the van world.

It offers better economy and range, good pulling power low down the rev range, extended service periods, lower maintenance costs and long-lasting parts.

Gearboxes have also changed. A six-speed manual is the norm – two cogs better than just a few years ago – but urban operators are turning increasingly to automatic, semi-automatic or clutch-less transmissions.

These can usually be driven with manual selection anyway, but are ideal for stop-start town conditions and can be as economical as a manual.

No longer waiting in the wings though is a further option for urban operators – electric power.

The electric van seems made for the city: its instant power delivery is ideal for stop-start traffic and any braking or deceleration simply helps recharge the batteries.

And even if the van's range – more than 100 miles in the case of Renault's Kangoo ZE – is compromised by a demanding day, most urban areas now have convenient quick charging points.

Being zero emission, electric vans also escape road tax and congestion charges, and there's a PR gain if your company wants to project an eco-friendly image.

NO 'OLD SOLDIERS': vans like the latest car-derived Citroën Berlingo now get updated and renewed more often

Fickle finger of fashion arrives in van sector

VANITY has finally reached the van market, according to market watchers at CAP Automotive, who point to the rapid turnover of model designs introduced by manufacturers.

Until now, the van world seemed immune from the pace of change that sees car designs replaced faster and faster; CAP says the shelf life of some car models has halved since the 1970s as manufacturers strive ever harder to keep products as fresh and interesting as possible.

But design changes and new features have always arrived more slowly in the van market – until now.

CAP's spokesman Tim Cattlin explained: "The days when a van was solely regarded as a work tool are certainly coming to an end. The creep of vanity into the van market is a mixed blessing. It ensures a more dynamic marketplace, with exciting and fresh offerings appearing with increasing regularity.

"But it also threatens faster depreciation as model 'shelf life' begins to shorten and end users are constantly drawn to the newest vehicle on offer."

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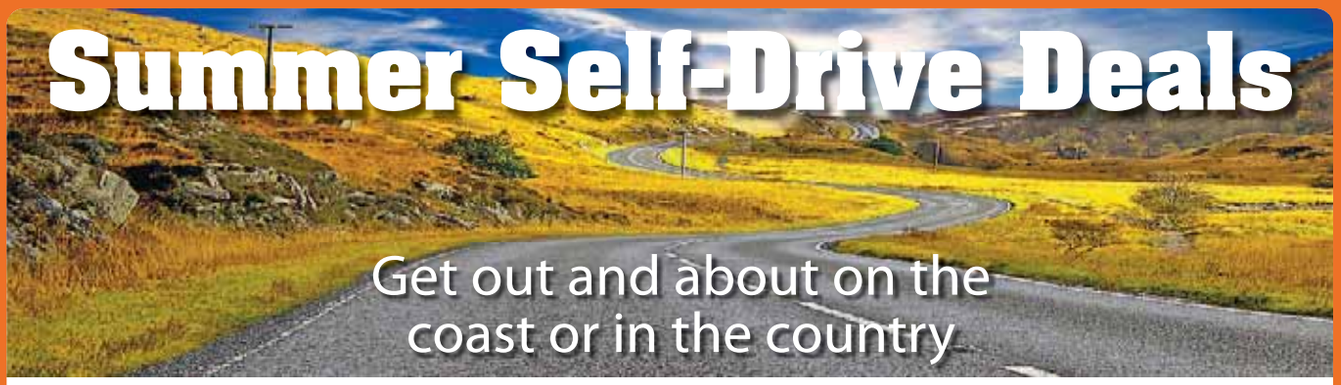


Get out and about on the coast or in the country

4 NIGHTS MON-FRI	
1 June	£239pp
6 July	£239pp
13 July	£239pp
17 August	£239pp

Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing

June - August, 2015 • 4 nights half board, £**239**pp • Quote: CH-KOS

Worthing's Chatsworth Hotel is one of the finest hotels on the south coast. Close to the sea and a short stroll from the town centre, the Chatsworth is a 3-star hotel in a Grade II-listed building, steeped in history with a distinctive Georgian frontage. Well known locally for offering impeccable service and a warm welcome, the hotel has a silver tourism award for quality. A well-stocked games room, has two slate-bedded Snooker tables,a pool table, table tennis, darts and a skittle alley. All bedrooms are en-suite and a lift services all floors.

INCLUDED: 4 nights stay at Chatsworth Hotel sharing a twin/double bedded room with en-suite facilities • 4 dinners and 4 breakfasts

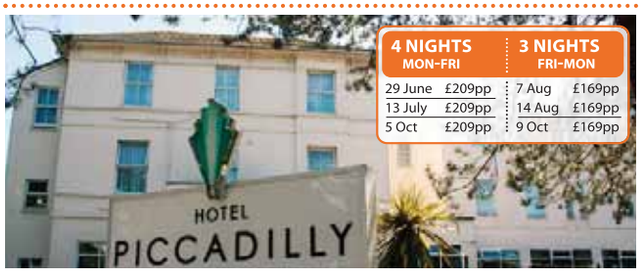
4 NIGHTS MON-FRI	
6 July	£139pp
27 July	£139pp
3 August	£139pp
10 August	£139pp
24 August	£139pp

Bosworth Hall Hotel, Leicestershire

July - August, 2015 • 4 nights half board, £**139**pp • Quote: BH-KOS

Enjoy a great value, relaxing summer break at Bosworth Hall Hotel, set in 11 acres of landscaped gardens in the village of Market Bosworth near Leicester. The hotel has a leisure club with an indoor pool, gym, tennis courts, bike hire and more - extra charge applies. There's plenty to see and do within a short drive of Market Bosworth; Twycross Zoo, West Midlands Safari Park and Drayton Manor Park are close by as are Bosworth Water Trust and the National Forest.

INCLUDED: 4 nights stay at Bosworth Hall Hotel sharing a twin/double bedded room with en-suite facilities • 4 dinners and 4 breakfasts



4 NIGHTS MON-FRI		3 NIGHTS FRI-MON	
29 June	£209pp	7 Aug	£169pp
13 July	£209pp	14 Aug	£169pp
5 Oct	£209pp	9 Oct	£169pp

Hotel Piccadilly, Bournemouth

June - Oct, 2015 • 3 or 4 nights half board, from £**169**pp • Quote: PH-KOS

The Hotel Piccadilly is a privately-owned 3-star hotel situated close to the town centre and a short walk from Bournemouth's award winning beaches. The Hotel is comfortable and stylish with long-serving staff providing warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The Lounges are spacious, yet with quiet corners in which to relax. All the bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms and colour TV as well as tea and coffee facilites.

INCLUDED: 3 or 4 nights sharing a standard twin/double-bedded en suite room • Breakfast and dinner each day

3 NIGHTS FRI-MON	
7 August	£189pp
14 August	£189pp
21 August	£189pp
28 August	£189pp

Ettington Chase Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon

August, 2015 • 3 nights half board, £**189**pp • Quote: EC-KOS

Ettington Chase is a stylish, luxury hotel near Stratford-upon-Avon. Set in 11 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds in the heart of Shakespeare country, Ettington Chase elegantly combines a beautiful historic building with modern facilities including an elegant restaurant bar with a reputation for quality cuisine. All bedrooms are en-suite with wireless high-speed Internet access and flat-screen HD TVs. The onsite leisure club with pool, sauna and tennis provides excellent facilities for families enjoying a short breaks.

INCLUDED: 3 nights sharing a standard twin/double-bedded en suite room • Breakfast and dinner each day • Free wifi

4 NIGHTS MON-FRI		3 NIGHTS FRI-MON	
18 May	£109pp	5 June	£89pp
8 June	£119pp	19 June	£89pp
15 June	£119pp		
22 June	£119pp		
6 July	£139pp	23 July	£109pp
13 July	£139pp	17 July	£109pp
20 July	£139pp		
3 Aug	£139pp	7 Aug	£109pp
10 Aug	£139pp	14 Aug	£109pp
31 Aug	£139pp		

Grand Burstin Hotel, Folkestone

May-August, 2015 • 3 or 4 nights half board, from £**89**pp • Quote: GB-KOS

The Grand Burstin Hotel is set in a prime position overlooking Folkestone Harbour. It is renowned as one of the UK's top entertainment hotels, so you can relax, dine in style and be entertained all under one roof. Cabaret shows are performed every evening - fantastic entertainment for all ages! The Spindles Health Club has an indoor heated Swimming pool, sauna and a state of the art gym (£4 per session payable on site).

INCLUDED: 3 or 4 nights sharing a twin/double-bedded en suite room • Breakfast and dinner each day • Entertainment every night • Free wifi

3 NIGHTS FRI-MON	
7 August	£179pp
14 August	£179pp
21 August	£179pp
28 August	£179pp

4-star Beaumont Estate, Windsor

August, 2015 • 3 nights half board, £**179**pp • Quote: BE-KOS

Set in 40 acres of stunning parkland on the edge of historic Windsor, Beaumont Estate is a majestic hotel. There's a vast range of attractions nearby including Windsor Great Park, Legoland, Thorpe Park, Windsor Castle and Windsor Racecourse. The bedrooms are charming, cosy, and thoughtfully furnished to create a relaxing environment after a long day of exploration. All have en-suite facilities and feature wireless high-speed Internet access and flat-screen HD TVs.

INCLUDED: 3 nights sharing a standard twin/double-bedded en suite room • Breakfast and dinner each day • Free wifi

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Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 7/05/2015
Salary: Dependent on qualifications and experience

Qualifications and Experience

- Registered Nurse 1st level
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- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Mary Guarnieri, Ward Manager on 01843 234249

For a job description and application form for this post please visit **www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers**

Alternatively, please contact **Justine Whittle, HR Assistant**
Telephone: **01304 245943** E-mail: **recruitment@spencerhospitals.com**

Spencer Private Hospitals is an equal opportunity employer.
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Spencer Private Hospitals

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2 days a week from 1st September 2015 to 31st August 2016

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Interviews: w/c 18th May 2015

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

MARINE AND COASTAL ACCESS ACT 2009
APPLICATION FOR MARINE LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that London Array Ltd has applied to the Marine Management Organisation under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, Part 4, for a marine licence to undertake future Operational and Maintenance (O&M) repairs or replacements on the inter-array cables at London Array Offshore Wind Farm. The Application together with maps showing the location of the wind farm (including cables) may be inspected (between the hours of 8:30 am to 4:00 pm) at:

The London Array Management Building
Port of Ramsgate
Military Road
Ramsgate - Kent
CT11 9LG
www.londonarray.com

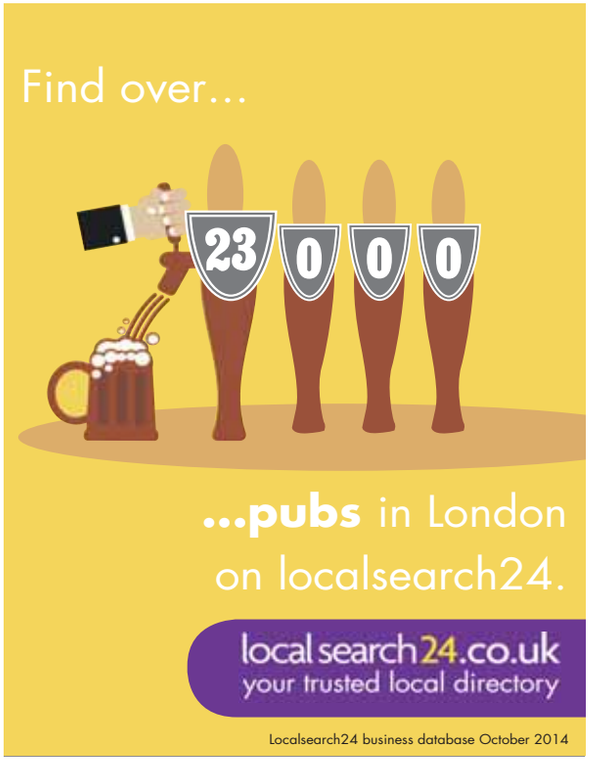
Copies of the Application and associated information may be viewed on line via the MMOs public register under the Eastern region, application reference MLA/2015/00095, at:

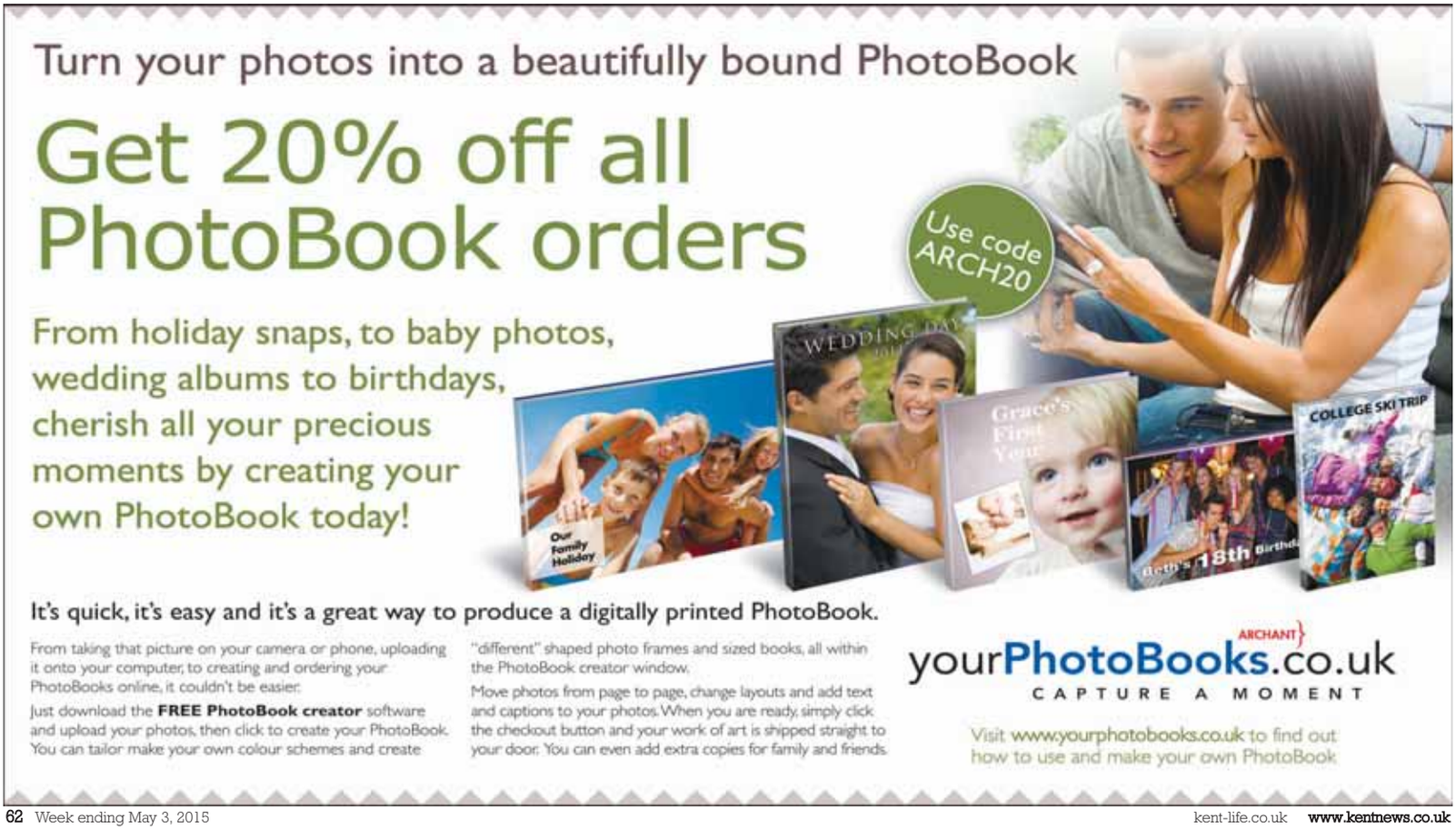
https://marinelicensing.marinemanagement.org.uk/mmo/fox/live/MMO_PUBLIC_REGISTER

Representations or objections in respect of the Application should be made in writing, giving an address to which correspondence relating to the representation or objection may be sent, to the Marine Management Organisation, Lancaster House, Hampshire Court, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7YH, or alternatively emailed* to marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk, within **28 days of 1 May 2015** quoting reference MLA/2015/00095.

The Marine Management Organisation will pass to the applicant a copy of any objection or representation we receive.

*If representations are provided by e-mail and an undeliverable message is received, please post representations to the above address.





Kent want win in first home battle

Rob Key determined to lead team to success after early loss

PERFORMANCE: Key said the squad 'weren't good enough' during their loss to Lancashire Pictures: ADY KERRY

Cricket

By Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

THE Spitfire Ground welcomes County Championship cricket back today (May 3), as Kent get their four day fixture against Leicestershire underway.

The county side started their season poorly, being beaten in the first two games they played. Now on home turf, they're hoping to finally secure some victory points.

Ivan Thomas, who has returned from injury this season after a long lay off, told KoS the team was ready.

He said: "We're feeling confident going into the game against Leicestershire. Its a great squad with some proper stars in the dressing room and the team's coming together so we're pretty upbeat going into this match.

"I've been away from first class cricket for around two and a half years, so it has been tough coming back. The team are great, and I feel like I've earned my place so it's good to be back out there."

The young fast-bowler also says that playing at Kent's home will give the team a bit of an edge going into the game.

He said: "Playing here will make a difference for us. It's a place we're comfortable in, with a good wicket and a pitch we know extremely well."

Kent's first games of the season were against two of the championship's toughest teams; Essex and Lancashire.

The side didn't fare well in either game, with Kent taking a battering against a dominant Lancashire who forced the county side to follow on.

Thomas told KoS that because of that, the squad had even more reason to come out fighting against Leicestershire today.

He said: "We definitely have something to prove in this game.

"At the start of the season, I think we put a lot of pressure on ourselves and as a result we struggled.

"However, during the first two games, we showed glimpses of what we're capable of. We're going to build on it, and get some consistency going in this game."

A win would help to exorcise some of those demons, as well as adding valuable points.

Thomas said: "The league table always matters to us, and obviously we don't want to see ourselves sat at the bottom of it.

"We'll definitely be looking to get points in this game and climb up the table."

County look to spoil Gills' final season outing

GILLINGHAM hold the power of relegation as they come face to face with Notts County today (May 3), with gaffer Justin Edinburgh saying he doesn't want to see County fans celebrating when the game ends.

The Gills will be looking for a strong win to put an end to what has been very much a season of two halves.

The rollercoaster is unlikely to finish when they clash with Notts County though, as they have the potential to send the northern team down.

That means that while the Gills know only too well that they can't rise, Notts will be fighting for their very survival in League One.

Gills boss Edinburgh says that it doesn't matter to him whether County are fighting for their survival, saying that though some might find that ruthless, it's just part of being a professional.

FLOURISH: Edinburgh wants to finish the season on a high note

He said: "We've got a job to do, and there's a lot riding on this game.

"I don't think they'd have any sympathy for us if the roles were reversed. That's part and parcel of being a professional.

"We need to make sure we have a winning mentality in the football club. I really don't want to see their players celebrating on my pitch after the end of the game.

"I want to see our players doing a lap of honour."

The Gills boss said that it was important for the team to take the win in their final game of the season.

He said: "We are just looking to make sure we finish on a high, with a good performance so that people leave here positive, and looking forward to the next campaign."

Kick off at Priestfield is 12.15pm.

Sport Shorts

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Maidstone in cup clash on hallowed ground

THE Stones are off to the home of English rugby, Twickenham, today as they clash with Bridgnorth in the RFU Intermediate Cup final.

The county town club are full of confidence following their trouncing of semi-final opponents Coney Hill, who they beat 44-13.

Bridgnorth found their route to the final more difficult, only winning by four points in a closely fought contest.

Club spokesman Bob Hayton told KoS: "We're supremely confident going in to this match.

"Having spoken to the skipper and manager, we'll be concentrating on playing our game to its full potential, rather than getting too caught up in playing theirs. We'll be setting the agenda, rather than marching to their tune.

"Obviously we are two unbeaten squads, so someone will be leaving disappointed, but I'm confident it won't be us."

UPBEAT: Maidstone RFC feel confident ahead of the game

POINTS: Shakey wants to cement his lead at the top of the table

Byrne on the hunt for wins after Brands

SHANE 'Shakey' Byrne has said he will be looking for wins when he takes to the track this weekend in the British Superbike races at Oulton Park.

The Sheppey based racer currently leads the championship table, but says he isn't complacent and is working hard with his team to make sure he's at the front.

He said: "Oulton Park is a great track, it's one of those places where different bikes have different strengths and weaknesses in different areas so I expect it to be really close there. It would be really nice to come away from Oulton Park with another win or preferably even two as the last one we had at Donington seems like a long time ago now."

Shakey said that his performance at home track Brands Hatch had been a 'kick up the backside'.

He said: "We need to learn from Brands Hatch, regroup, and take steps forward and hopefully get back to the front again. That is the plan for this weekend although I know it won't come easily."

New badge for promoted Stones

MAIDSTONE United have celebrated their promotion into the Vanarama National League South by unveiling a alternative club badge - which will appear on the team's kit - ahead of next season.

The Stones were crowned Ryman Premier champions last Saturday (April 25) after beating East Thurrock 3-2 in their final match of the season. They've now revealed the new badge, which, says Stones CEO Bill Williams, reflects the club's illustrious heritage.

Williams said: "Those who've followed the Stones for more than 40 years will recognise it from a previous version – it's a retro design fit for 2015 and beyond."

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11 61	Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi 16v SR 23,909 miles	£9,575
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12 12	Vauxhall Astra GTC 1.4 i Turbo 17,348 miles	£9,900
12 62	Vauxhall Astra GTC 1.4 i Turbo 14,447 miles	£10,000
13 13	Vauxhall Astra GTC 1.4 i Turbo 12,279 miles	£10,500
14 64	Vauxhall Astra GTC 1.4 i Turbo 205 miles	£14,000
13 13	Vauxhall Astra GTC 1.6 i Turbo 11,808 miles	£11,796
13 13	Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 i 16v SE 3d 17,650 miles	£7,700
12 12	Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 i 16v SE 5d 36,438 miles	£7,000
13 13	Vauxhall Corsa 1.2 i Energy 3d 8,596 miles	£7,500
13 13	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 Energy 5dr 16,466 miles	£7,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 15,304 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 13,895 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 13,648 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 12,839 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 12,475 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 12,163 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 12,223 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 12,309 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 12,356 miles	£8,967
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 11,929 miles	£9,100
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 11,725 miles	£9,100
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 11,765 miles	£9,100
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 11,828 miles	£9,100
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 11,872 miles	£9,100
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 11,622 miles	£9,100
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SE 5d 8,965 miles	£9,200
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SRi 3 12,448 miles	£9,000
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SRi 3 10,494 miles	£9,100
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SRi 3 8,406 miles	£9,180
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SRi 3 3,416 miles	£9,344
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SRi 5 9,981 miles	£9,144
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 3 15,595 miles	£8,635
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 3 13,852 miles	£8,694
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 3 12,963 miles	£8,724
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 3 11,811 miles	£8,764
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 3 9,765 miles	£8,825
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 3 8,258 miles	£8,881
13 13	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 5 11,947 miles	£7,699
13 63	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 5 14,871 miles	£7,700
14 14	Vauxhall Corsa 1.4 i 16v SXi 5 10,694 miles	£8,500
11 61	Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi 16v 40,563 miles	£10,600
14 14	Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi eco 19,737 miles	£14,000
14 14	Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi eco 15,010 miles	£14,288
14 14	Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi eco 15,161 miles	£14,288
14 14	Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi Tec 6,664 miles	£15,773
12 62	Vauxhall Meriva 1.3 CDTi 16v T 20,451 miles	£10,339
14 14	Vauxhall Mokka 1.7 CDTi ecoFLE 17,667 miles	£15,982
14 14	Vauxhall Mokka 1.7 CDTi ecoFLE 16,905 miles	£16,000
14 14	Vauxhall Mokka 1.7 CDTi ecoFLE 15,441 miles	£16,000
14 14	Vauxhall Mokka 1.7 CDTi ecoFLE 14,951 miles	£16,122
14 14	Vauxhall Mokka 1.7 CDTi ecoFLE 14,654 miles	£16,132
14 14	Vauxhall Mokka 1.7 CDTi ecoFLE 12,357 miles	£16,253
09 09	Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 i 16v Desi 45,555 miles	£6,655
10 60	Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 i VVT 16v 57,760 miles	£6,598
12 62	Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 i VVT 16v 19,015 miles	£8,767
12 12	Vauxhall Zafira 1.6 i VVT 16v 6,194 miles	£9,670
11 61	Vauxhall Zafira 1.7 CDTi ecoFL 33,443 miles	£9,000
13 13	Vauxhall Zafira 1.8 i VVT 16v 9,823 miles	£11,717

Chevrolet

11 61	Chevrolet Cruze 1.6 i LT 5dr 29,477 miles	£6,400
13 13	Chevrolet Spark 1.2 LTZ 5dr 29,366 miles	£5,700
13 13	Chevrolet Spark 1.2 LTZ 5dr 28,591 miles	£5,800
13 13	Chevrolet Spark 1.2 LTZ 5dr 28,667 miles	£5,800
11 61	Citroen Berlingo Multispace 1. 15,326 miles	£9,300
12 62	Citroen C3 Picasso 1.6 VTi Exc 9,303 miles	£9,800
11 61	Citroen Grand C4 Picasso 1.6 H 24,964 miles	£11,400

Dacia

14 14	Dacia Duster 1.5 dCi Laureate 16,769 miles	£10,700
14 14	Dacia Duster 1.5 dCi Laureate 12,145 miles	£10,900

Fiat

13 13	Fiat 500 0.9 TwinAir S 3dr (st 28,309 miles	£8,800

Ford

13 13	Ford B-Max 1.4 Zetec 5dr 4,325 miles	£10,000
13 63	Ford B-Max 1.6 Zetec Powershif 3,004 miles	£11,500
14 14	Ford C-Max 1.6 Zetec 5dr 13,581 miles	£11,700
12 12	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Zetec 3dr 3,773 miles	£8,400
12 12	Ford Focus 1.6 Ti-VCT Zetec 5d 19,068 miles	£9,400
11 61	Ford Focus 1.6 Ti-VCT Zetec 5d 5,352 miles	£9,500
11 61	Ford Focus 1.6 Ti-VCT Zetec 5d 5,803 miles	£9,500
12 12	Ford Focus 1.6 Ti-VCT Zetec 5d 27,119 miles	£9,600
12 12	Ford Focus 1.6 Ti-VCT Zetec 5d 15,310 miles	£9,800
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13 63	Seat Leon 1.6 TDI SE 5dr (star 22,846 miles	£11,000
13 63	Seat Leon 1.6 TDI SE 5dr (star 22,198 miles	£11,000

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14 64	Subaru Forester 2.0 i XE Linea 1,001 miles	£23,916
14 64	Subaru Outback 2.0 D SX Linear 2,000 miles	£25,000
14 64	Subaru XV 2.0 D SE Premium 5dr 1,300 miles	£21,700

Suzuki

14 14	Suzuki Swift 1.6 Sport 3dr (Na 11,402 miles	£11,200

Volvo

11 61	Volvo S40 2.0 SE Lux 4dr 25,619 miles	£8,700
11 61	Volvo S40 2.0 SE Lux 4dr 26,514 miles	£8,800

Audi

12 12	Audi A1 1.6 TDI Sport Sportbac 25,437 miles	£13,900
12 62	Audi A3 1.6 TDI SE 3dr 22,179 miles	£15,400
12 12	Audi A5 2.0 TFSI S Line 3dr 34,733 miles	£20,600
10 60	Audi A5 2.0 TFSI Sportback 5dr 36,360 miles	£11,600

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14 64	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Premium 4d 3,100 miles	£22,000
14 14	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Premium 4d 3,465 miles	£26,000
14 64	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Premium 4d 3,254 miles	£27,400
14 64	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Premium 4d 2,076 miles	£27,600
14 64	Infiniti Q50 2.2 TD Sport 4dr 3,885 miles	£27,000
14 14	Infiniti Q50 3.5 S Hybrid AWD 8,785 miles	£34,900
14 64	Infiniti Q70 3.5 GT 4dr Hybrid 1,001 miles	£29,000
14 14	Infiniti QX70 3.0 TD S AWD 5dr 10,016 miles	£34,300

MG

14 14	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Form Spor 2,563 miles	£7,600
14 14	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Form Spor 1,086 miles	£7,600
14 64	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Form Spor 1,001 miles	£8,000
14 64	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Form Spor 1,754 miles	£8,000
14 64	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Style 5dr 2,500 miles	£8,500
14 64	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Style 5dr 1,001 miles	£8,500
14 14	MG MG3 1.5 VTi-Tech 3Style Lux 2,500 miles	£8,200

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12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 49,427 miles	£10,700
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14 64	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 5,948 miles	£17,100
12 62	Nissan Juke 1.5 dCi Visia 5dr 19,798 miles	£10,600
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12 12	Nissan Juke 1.6 (s/s) Acenta 5 5,927 miles	£10,600
13 13	Nissan Juke 1.6 (s/s) Acenta P 12,076 miles	£11,400
12 12	Nissan Juke 1.6 16v Acenta Pre 26,069 miles	£10,600
13 13	Nissan Juke 1.6 16v Visia 5dr 18,396 miles	£9,600
12 62	Nissan Note 1.4 16v N-Tec+ 5dr 8,443 miles	£7,800
11 61	Nissan Note 1.5 dCi Tekna 5dr 16,398 miles	£7,400
11 61	Nissan Note 1.6 16v N-Tec 5dr 30,418 miles	£6,000
13 13	Nissan Note 1.6 16v N-Tec+ 5dr 5,900 miles	£8,300
13 13	Nissan Note 1.6 16v N-Tec+ 5dr 3,731 miles	£8,400
14 14	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta 7,936 miles	£17,400
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi N-Tec 5 33,185 miles	£13,200
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi N-Tec 5 19,026 miles	£13,900
11 61	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta 5dr 15,118 miles	£11,200
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta 5dr 22,005 miles	£11,300
12 12	Nissan Qashqai 1.6 Acenta 5dr 15,633 miles	£11,500
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